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Crema ; or, My Father's Sin.

CHAPTER I.

A LOST LANDMARK.

The sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.



THESE are the words that have haunted me always. This is the ban which has overcast my life.

If I had not known my father, if I had not loved him, if I had not closed his eyes in desert silence deeper than the silence of the grave; even if I could have buried and bewailed him duly; the common business of this world, and the universal carelessness, might have led me down the general track that leads to nothing.

Until my father fell and died, I never dreamed

that he could die. I knew that his mind was quite made up to see me safe in my new home, and then himself to start again for still

remoter solitudes. And when his mind was thus made up, who had ever known him fail of it?

If ever a resolute man there was, that very man was my father. And he showed it now, in this the last and fatal act of his fatal life. "Captain, here I leave you all," he shouted to the leader of our waggon-train, at a place where a dark, narrow gorge departed from the moilsome mountain-track. "My reasons are my own; let no man trouble himself about them. All my baggage I leave with you. I have paid my share of the venture, and shall claim it at Sacramento. My little girl and I will take this short cut through the mountains."

"General!" answered the leader of our train, standing up on his board in amazement. "Forgive and forget, sir; forgive and forget. What is a hot word spoken hotly? If not for your own sake, at least come back for the sake of your young daughter."

"A fair haven to you!" replied my father; he offered me his hand, and we were out of sight of all that wearisome, drearish, uncompanionable company with whom, for eight long weeks at least, we had been dragging our rough way. I had known in a moment that it must be so, for my father never argued. Argument, to his mind, was a very nice amusement for the weak. My spirits rose as he swung his bearskin bag upon his shoulder, and the last sound of the labouring caravan groaned in the distance, and the fresh air and the freedom of the mountains moved around us. It was the 29th of May—Oak-apple Day in England—and to my silly youth this vast extent of snowy mountains was a nice place for a cool excursion.

Moreover, from day to day I had been in most wretched anxiety, so long as we remained with people who could not allow for us. My father, by his calm reserve, and dignity, and largeness, had always among European people kept himself secluded; but now in this rough life, so pent in trackless tracts, and pressed together by perpetual peril, everybody's manners had been growing free and easy. Every man had been compelled to tell, as truly as he could, the story of his life thus far, to amuse his fellow-creatures—every man, I mean, of course, except my own poor father. Some told their stories every evening, until we were quite tired—although they were never the same twice over—but my father could never be coaxed to say a syllable more than, "I was born, and I shall die."

This made him very unpopular with the men, though all the women admired it; and if any rough fellow could have seen a sign of fear, the speaker would have been insulted. But his manner and the power of his look were such that even after ardent spirits no man saw fit to be rude to him. Nevertheless, there had always been the risk of some sad outrage.

"Erema," my father said to me, when the dust from the rear of the caravan was lost behind a cloud of rocks, and we two stood in the wilderness alone; "do you know, my own Erema, why I bring you from them?"

"Father dear, how should I know? You have done it, and it must be right."

"It is not for their paltry insults. Child, you know what I think all that. It is for you, my only child, that I am doing what now I do."

I looked up into his large, sad eyes without a word, in such a way that he lifted me up in his arms and kissed me, as if I were a little child instead of a maiden just fifteen. This he had never done before, and it made me a little frightened. He saw it, and spoke on the spur of the thought, though still with one arm round me.

"Perhaps you will live to be thankful, my dear, that you had a stern, cold father. So will you meet the world all the better; and, little one, you have a rough world to meet."

For a moment I was quite at a loss to account for my father's manner; but now, in looking back, it is so easy to see into things. At the time I must have been surprised, and full of puzzled eagerness.

Not half so well can I recall the weakness, anguish, and exhaustion of body and spirit afterwards. It may have been three days of wandering, or it may have been a week, or even more than that, for all that I can say for certain. Whether the time were long or short, it seemed as if it would never end. My father believed that he knew the way to the house of an old settler at the western foot of the mountains, who had treated him kindly some years before, and with whom he meant to leave me, until he had made arrangements elsewhere. If we had only gone straight-way thither, nightfall would have found us safe beneath that hospitable roof.

My father was vexed, as I well remember, at coming, as he thought, in sight of some great landmark, and finding not a trace of it. Although his will was so very strong, his temper was good about little things, and he never began to abuse all the world because he had made a mistake himself.

"Erema," he said, "at this corner where we stand, there ought to be a very large pine-tree in sight, or rather a gigantic tree, without a name, at least twice as high as any tree that grows in Europe, or Africa even. From the plains it can be seen for a hundred miles or more. It stands higher up the mountain-side than any other tree of even half its size, and that makes it so conspicuous. My eyes must be failing me, from all this glare; but it must be in sight. Can you see it now?"

"I see no tree of any kind whatever, but scrubby bushes and yellow tufts; and oh, father, I am so thirsty."

"Naturally. But now look again. It stands on a ridge, the last ridge that bars the view of all the lowland. It is a very straight tree, and regular, like a mighty column, except that on the northern side the wind from the mountains has torn a gap in it. Are you sure that you cannot see it—a long way off, but conspicuous?"

"Father, I am sure that I cannot see any tree half as large as a broomstick. Far or near, I see no tree."

"Then my eyes are better than my memory. We must cast back for a mile or two; but it cannot make much difference."

"Through the dust and the sand?" I began to say; but a glance from him stopped my murmuring. And the next thing I can call to mind must have happened a long time afterwards.

Beyond all doubt, in this desolation, my father gave his life for mine. I did not know it at the time, nor had the faintest dream of it; being so young and weary-worn, and obeying him by instinct. It is a fearful thing to think of—now that I can think of it—but to save my own little worthless life I must have drained every drop of water from his flat half-gallon jar. The water was hot and the cork-hole sandy, and I grumbled even while drinking it; and what must my father (who was dying all the while for a drop, but never took one), what must he have thought of me?

But he never said a word, so far as I remember; and that makes it all the worse for me. We had strayed away into a dry, volcanic district of the mountains, where all the snow-rivers run out quite early; and of natural springs there was none forthcoming. All we had to guide us was a little traveller's compass (whose needle stuck fast on the pivot with sand) and the glaring sun, when he came to sight behind the hot, dry, driving clouds. The clouds were very low, and flying almost in our faces, like vultures sweeping down on us. To me they seemed to shriek over our heads at the others rushing after them. But my father said that they could make no sound, and I never contradicted him.

CHAPTER II.

A PACIFIC SUNSET.

At last we came to a place from which the great spread of the earth was visible. For a time—I cannot tell how long—we had wholly lost ourselves; going up and down, and turning corners, without getting further. But my father said that we must come right, if we made up our minds to go long enough. We had been in among all shapes, and want of shapes, of dreariness, through and in and out of every thrup and thrum of weariness, scarcely hoping ever more to find our way out and discover memory of men for us, when all of a sudden we saw a grand sight. The day had been dreadfully hot and baffling, with sudden swirls of red dust arising, and driving the great drought into us. To walk had been worse than to drag one's way through a stubbly bed of sting-nettles. But now the quick sting of the sun was gone, and his power descending in the balance towards the flat places of the land and sea. And suddenly we looked forth upon an immeasurable spread of these.

We stood at the gate of the sandy range, which here, like a vast brown patch, disfigures the beauty of the sierra. On either side, in purple distance, sprang sky-piercing obelisks and vapour-mantled gla-

ciens, spangled with bright snow, and shodden with eternal forest. Before us lay the broad, luxuriant plains of California, chequered with more tints than any other piece of earth can show, sleeping in alluvial ease, and veined with soft blue waters. And through a gap in the brown coast-range, at twenty leagues of distance, a light (so faint as to seem a shadow) hovered above the Pacific.

But none of all this grandeur touched our hearts except the water-gleam. Parched with thirst, I caught my father's arm and tried to urge him on towards the blue enchantment of ecstatic living water. But, to my surprise, he staggered back, and his face grew as white as the distant snow. I managed to get him to a sandy ledge, with the help of his own endeavours, and there let him rest, and try to speak, while my frightened heart throbbed over his.

"My little child," he said at last, as if we were fallen back ten years, "put your hand where I can feel it."

My hand all the while had been in his, and to let him know where it was it moved. But cold fear stopped my talking.

"My child, I have not been kind to you," my father slowly spoke again, "but it has not been from want of love. Some day you will see all this, and some day you will pardon me."

He laid one heavy arm around me, and forgetting thirst and pain, with the last intensity of eyesight watched the sun departing. To me, I know not how, great awe was everywhere, and sadness. The conical point of the furious sun, which like a barb had pierced us, was broadening into a hazy disk, inefficient, but benevolent. Underneath him depth of night was waiting to come upward (after letting him fall through) and stain his track with redness. Already the arms of darkness grew in readiness to receive him; his upper arc was pure and keen, but the lower was flaked with atmosphere; a glow of hazy light soon would follow, and one bright glimmer (addressed more to the sky than earth), and after that a broad, soft gleam; and after that how many a man should never see the sun again, and among them would be my father.

He, for the moment, resting there, with heavy light upon him, and the dark jaws of the mountain desert yawning wide behind him, and all the beautiful expanse of liberal earth before him—even so he seemed to me, of all the things in sight, the one that first would draw attention. His face was full of quiet grandeur and impressive calm, and the sad tranquillity which comes to those who know what human life is through continual human death. Although, in the matter of bodily strength, he was little past the prime of life, his long and abundant hair was white, and his broad and upright forehead marked with the meshes of the net of care. But drought, and famine, and long fatigue had failed even now to change or weaken the fine expression of his large, sad eyes. Those eyes alone would have made the face remarkable among ten thousand, so deep with settled gloom they were, and dark with fatal sorrow. Such eyes might fitly have told the grief of Adrastus, son of

Gordias, who having slain his own brother unwitting, unwitting slew the only son of his generous host and saviour.

The pale globe of the sun hung trembling in the haze himself had made. My father rose to see the last, and reared his tall form upright against the deepening background. He gazed as if the course of life lay vanishing below him, while level land and waters drew the breadth of shadow over them. Then the last gleam flowed and fled upon the face of ocean, and my father put his dry lips to my forehead, saying nothing.

His lips might well be dry for he had not swallowed water for three days; but it frightened me to feel how cold they were, and even tremulous. "Let us run, let us run, my dear father!" I cried. "Delicious water! The dark falls quickly; but we can get there before dark. It is all down-hill. Oh, do let us run at once!"

"Erema," he answered, with a quiet smile, "there is no cause now for hurrying, except that I must hurry to show you what you have to do, my child. For once, at the end of my life, I am lucky. We have escaped from that starving desert, at a spot—at a spot where we can see—"

For a little while he could say no more, but sank upon the stony seat, and the hand with which he tried to point some distant landmark fell away. His face, which had been so pale before, became of a deadly whiteness; and he breathed with gasps of agony. I knelt before him and took his hands, and tried to rub the palms, and did whatever I could think of.

"Oh, father, father, you have starved yourself, and given everything to me! What a brute I was to let you do it! But I did not know; I never knew! Please God to take me also!"

He could not manage to answer this, even if he understood it; but he firmly lifted his arm again, and tried to make me follow it.

"What does it matter? Oh, never mind, never mind such a wretch as I am! Father, only try to tell me what I ought to do for you."

"My child, my child," were his only words; and he kept on saying, "My child, my child," as if he liked the sound of it.

At what time of the night my father died I knew not then or afterwards. It may have been before the moon came over the snowy mountains, or it may not have been till the worn-out stars in vain repelled the daybreak. All I know is that I ever strove to keep more near to him through the night, to cherish his failing warmth, and quicken the slow, laborious, harassed breath. From time to time he tried to pray to God, for me and for himself; but every time his mind began to wander and to slip away, as if through want of practice. For the chills of many wretched years had deadened and benumbed his faith. He knew me, now and then, betwixt the conflict and the stupor; for more than once he muttered feebly, and as if from out a dream—

"Time for Erema to go on her way. Go on your way, and save your life—save your life, Erema."

There was no way for me to go, except on my knees before him. I

took his hands, and made them lissome with a soft, light rubbing. I whispered into his ear my name, that he might speak once more to me; and when he could not speak, I tried to say what he would say to me.

At last, with a blow that stunned all words, it smote my stupid, wandering mind, that all I had to speak and smile to, all I cared to please and serve, the only one left to admire and love, lay here in my weak arms quite dead. And in the anguish of my sobbing little things came home to me, a thousand little things that showed how quietly he had prepared for this, and provided for me only. Cold despair, and self-reproach, and strong rebellion dazed me, until I lay at my father's side, and slept with his dead hand in mine. There in the desert of desolation pious awe embraced me, and small phantasms of individual fear could not come nigh me.

By-and-by long shadows of morning crept toward me dismally, and the pallid light of the hills was stretched in weary streaks away from me. How I arose, or what I did, or what I thought, is nothing now. Such times are not for talking of. How many hearts of anguish lie forlorn, with none to comfort them, with all the joy of life died out, and all the fear of having yet to live, in front arising.

Young, and weak, and wrong of sex for doing any valiance, long I lay by my father's body, wringing out my wretchedness. Thirst and famine now had flown into the opposite extreme; I seemed to loathe the thought of water, and the smell of food would have made me sick. I opened my father's knapsack, and a pang of new misery seized me. There lay nearly all his rations, which he had made pretence to eat, as he gave me mine from time to time. He had starved himself; since he failed of his mark, and learned our risk of famishing, all his own food he had kept for me, as well as his store of water. And I had done nothing but grumble and groan, even while consuming everything. Compared with me, the hovering vultures were as ministering angels.

When I found all this, I was a great deal too worn out to cry or sob. Simply to break down may be the purest mercy that can fall on truly hopeless misery. Screams of ravenous maws, and flaps of fetid wings, came close to me; and fainting into the arms of death, I tried to save my father's body by throwing my own over it.

CHAPTER III.

A STURDY COLONIST.

FOR the contrast betwixt that dreadful scene and the one on which my dim eyes slowly opened three days afterwards, first I thank the Lord in heaven, whose gracious care was over me; and after Him some very simple members of humanity.

A bronze-coloured woman, with soft, sad eyes, was looking at me steadfastly. She had seen that, under tender care, I was just beginning

to revive, and being acquainted with many troubles, she had learned to succour all of them. This I knew not then, but felt that kindness was around me.

"Arauna, arauna, my shild," she said, in a strange but sweet and soothing voice; "you are with the good man in the safe, good house. Let old Suan give you the good food, my shild."

"Where is my father? Oh, show me my father!" I whispered faintly, as she raised me in the bed and held a large spoon to my lips.

"You shall—you shall—it is too very much Inglese; me tell you when have long Sunday time to think. My shild, take the good food from poor old Suan."

She looked at me with such beseeching eyes that even if food had been loathsome to me I could not have resisted her; whereas I was now in the quick-reviving agony of starvation. The Indian woman fed me with far greater care than I was worth, and hushed me, with some soothing process, into another abyss of sleep.

More than a week passed by me thus, in the struggle between life and death, before I was able to get clear knowledge of anybody or anything. No one, in my wakeful hours, came into my little bedroom except this careful Indian nurse, who hushed me off to sleep whenever I wanted to ask questions. Suan Isco, as she was called, possessed a more than mesmeric power of soothing a weary frame to rest; and this was seconded, where I lay, by the soft, incessant cadence and abundant roar of water. Thus every day I recovered strength and natural impatience.

"The master is coming to see you, shild," Suan said to me one day, when I had sat up, and done my hair, and longed to be down by the waterfall; "if, if—too much Inglese—old Suan say no more can now."

"If I am ready, and able, and willing! Oh, Suan, run and tell him not to lose one moment."

"No sure; Suan no sure at all," she answered, looking at me calmly, as if there were centuries yet to spare. "Suan no hurry; shild no hurry; master no hurry: come last of all."

"I tell you, Suan, I want to see him. And I am not accustomed to be kept waiting. My dear father insisted always—but oh, Suan, Suan, he is dead—I am almost sure of it."

"Him old man quite dead enough, and big hole dug in the land for him. Very good; more good than could be. Suan no more Inglese."

Well as I had known it long, a catching of the breath and hollow, helpless pain came through me—to meet in dry words thus the dread which might have been but a hovering dream. I turned my face to the wall, and begged her not to send the master in.

But presently a large, firm hand was laid on my shoulder softly, and turning sharply round I beheld an elderly man looking down at me. His face was plain, and square, and solid, with short white curls on a rugged forehead, and fresh red cheeks, and a triple chin—fit base for

remarkably massive jaws. His frame was in keeping with his face, being very large and powerful, though not of my father's commanding height. His dress and appearance were those of a working—and a really hard-working—man, sober, steadfast, and self-respecting; but what engaged my attention most was the frank yet shrewd gaze of deep-set eyes. I speak of things as I observed them later, for I could not pay much heed just then.

"'Tis a poor little missy," he said with a gentle tone; "what things she hath been through! Will you take an old man's hand, my dear? Your father hath often taken it, though different from his rank of life. Sampson Gundry is my name, missy. Have you ever heard your father tell of it?"

"Many and many a time," I said, as I placed my hot little hand in his; "he never found more than one man true on earth, and it was you, sir."

"Come now," he replied, with his eyes for a moment sparkling at my warmth of words; "you must not have that in your young head, missy. It leads to a miserable life. Your father hath always been unlucky—the most unlucky that ever I did know. And luck cometh out in nothing clearer than in the kind of folk we meet. But the Lord in heaven ordereth all. I speak like a poor heathen."

"Oh, never mind that," I cried; "only tell me, were you in time to save—to save—" I could not bear to say what I wanted.

"In plenty of time, my dear; thanks to you. You must have fought when you could not fight; the real stuff, I call it. Your poor father lies where none can harm him. Come, missy, missy, you must not take on so. It is the best thing that could befall a man so bound up with calamity. It is what he hath prayed for for many a year—if only it were not for you. And now you are safe, and for sure he knows it, if the angels heed their business."

With these words he withdrew, and kindly sent Suan back to me, knowing that her soothing ways would help me more than argument. To my mind all things lay in deep confusion and abasement. Overcome with bodily weakness, and with bitter self-reproach, I even feared that to ask any questions might show want of gratitude. But a thing of that sort could not always last, and before very long I was quite at home with the history of Mr. Gundry.

Solomon Gundry, of Mevagissey, in the county of Cornwall, in England, betook himself to the United States in the last year of the last century. He had always been a most upright man, as well as a first-rate fisherman; and his family had made a rule—as most respectable families at that time did—to run a nice cargo of contraband goods not more than twice in one season. A highly querulous old lieutenant of the British navy (who had served under Nelson and lost both arms, yet kept "the rheumatics" in either stump) was appointed, in an evil hour, to the Cornish coast-guard; and he never rested until he had caught all

the best county families smuggling. Through this he lost his situation, and had to go to the workhouse; nevertheless, such a stir had been roused that (to satisfy public opinion) they made a large sacrifice of inferior people, and among them this Solomon Gundry. Now, the Gundries had long been a thick-set race, and had furnished some champion wrestlers; and Solomon kept to the family stamp in the matter of obstinacy. He made a bold mark at the foot of a bond for 150*l.*, and with no other sign than that, his partner in their stanch herring-smack (the "Good Hope," of Mevagissey) allowed him to make sail across the Atlantic with all he cared for.

This Cornish partner deserved to get all his money back; and so he did, together with good interest. Solomon Gundry thrived among a thrifty race at Boston; he married a sweet New England lass, and his eldest son was Sampson. Sampson, in the prime of life, and at its headstrong period, sought the far west, overland, through not much less of distance, and through even more of danger, than his English father had gone through. His name was known on the western side of the mighty chain of mountains before Colonel Fremont was heard of there, and before there was any gleam of gold on the lonely sunset frontage.

Here Sampson Gundry lived by tillage of the nobly fertile soil, ere Sacramento or San Francisco had any name to speak of. And though he did not show regard for any kind of society, he managed to have a wife and son, and keep them free from danger. But (as it appears to me the more, the more I think of everything) no one must assume to be aside the reach of Fortune because he has gathered himself so small that she should not care to strike at him. At any rate, good or evil powers smote Sampson Gundry heavily.

First he lost his wife, which was a "great denial" to him. She fell from a cliff while she was pegging out the linen, and the substance of her frame prevented her from ever getting over it. And after that he lost his son, his only son—for all the Gundries were particular as to quality—and the way in which he lost his son made it still more sad for him.

A reputable and valued woman had disappeared in a hasty way from a cattle-place down the same side of the hills. The desire of the Indians was to enlarge her value and get it. There were very few white men as yet within any distance to do good; but Sampson Gundry vowed that, if the will of the Lord went with him, that woman should come back to her family without robbing them of sixpence. To this intent he started with a company of some twenty men—white or black or middle-coloured (according to circumstances). He was their captain, and his son Elijah their lieutenant. Elijah had only been married for a fortnight, but was full of spirit and eager to fight with enemies; and he seems to have carried this too far, for all that came back to his poor bride was a lock of his hair and his blessing. He was buried in a bed of lava on the western slope of Shasta, and his wife died in her confinement, and was buried by the Blue River.

It was said at the time and long afterwards that Elijah Gundry—thus cut short—was the finest and noblest young man to be found from the mountains to the ocean. His father, in whose arms he died, led a sad and lonely life for years, and scarcely even cared (although of Cornish and New England race) to seize the glorious chance of wealth which lay at his feet beseeching him. By settlement he had possessed himself of a large and fertile district, sloping from the mountain foot along the banks of the swift Blue River, a tributary of the San Joaquin. And this was not all, for he also claimed the ownership of the upper valley, the whole of the mountain-gorge, and spring-head, whence that sparkling water flows. And when that fury of gold-digging in 1849 arose, very few men could have done what he did, without even thinking twice of it.

For Sampson Gundry stood, like a bull, on the banks of his own river, and defied the worst and most desperate men of all nations to pollute it. He had scarcely any followers or steadfast friends to back him; but his fame for stern courage was clear and strong, and his bodily presence most manifest. Not a shovel was thrust, nor a cradle rocked, in the bed of the Blue River.

But when a year or two had passed, and all the towns and villages, and even hovels and wayside huts, began to clink with money, Mr. Gundry gradually recovered a wholesome desire to have some. For now his grandson Ephraim was growing into biped shape, and having lost his mother when he first came into the world, was sure to need the more natural and maternal nutriment of money.

Therefore Sampson Gundry, though he would not dig for gold, wrought out a plan which he had long thought of. Nature helped him with all her powers of mountain, forest, and headlong stream. He set up a saw-mill, and built it himself; and there was no other to be found for twelve degrees of latitude and perhaps a score of longitude.

CHAPTER IV.

THE "KING OF THE MOUNTAINS."

If I think, and try to write for ever with the strongest words, I cannot express to any other mind a thousandth part of the gratitude which was, and is, and ought to be for ever, in my own poor mind towards those who were so good to me. From time to time it is said (whenever any man with power of speech or fancy gets some little grievances) that all mankind are simply selfish, miserly, and miserable. To contradict that saying needs experience even larger, perhaps, than that which has suggested it; and this I cannot have, and therefore only know that I have not found men or women behave at all according to that view of them.

Whether Sampson Gundry owed any debt, either of gratitude or of loyalty, to my father, I did not ask; and he seemed to be (like every one else) reserved and silent as to my father's history. But he always treated

me as if I belonged to a rank of life quite different from and much above his own. For instance, it was long before he would allow me to have my meals at the table of the household.

But as soon as I began in earnest to recover from starvation, loss, and loneliness, my heart was drawn to this grand old man, who had seen so many troubles. He had been here and there in the world so much, and dealt with so many people, that the natural frankness of his mind was sharpened into caution. But any weak and helpless person still could get the best of him; and his shrewdness certainly did not spring from any form of bitterness. He was rough in his ways sometimes, and could not bear to be contradicted when he was sure that he was right, which generally happened to him. But above all things he had one very great peculiarity, to my mind highly vexatious, because it seemed so unaccountable. Sampson Gundry had a very low opinion of feminine intellect. He never showed this contempt in any unpleasant way, and, indeed, he never perhaps displayed it in any positive sayings. But as I grew older and began to argue, sure I was that it was there; and it always provoked me tenfold as much, by seeming to need no assertion, but to stand as some great axiom.

The other members of the household were his grandson Ephraim (or "Firm" Gundry), the Indian woman Suan Isco, and a couple of helps of race or nation almost unknown to themselves. Suan Isco belonged to a tribe of respectable Black Rock Indians, and had been the wife of a chief among them, and the mother of several children. But Klamath Indians, enemies of theirs (who carried off the lady of the cattle ranche, and afterwards shot Elijah), had Suan Isco in their possession, having murdered her husband and children, and were using her as a mere beast of burden, when Sampson Gundry fell on them. He, with his followers, being enraged at the cold-blooded death of Elijah, fell on those miscreants to such purpose that women and children alone were left to hand down their bad propensities.

But the white men rescued and brought away the stolen wife of the stockman, and also the widow of the Black Rock chief. She was in such poor condition, and so broken-hearted, that none but the finest humanity would have considered her worth a quarter of the trouble of her carriage. But she proved to be worth it a thousandfold; and Sawyer Gundry (as now he was called) knew by this time all the value of uncultivated gratitude. And her virtues were so many that it took a long time to find them out, for she never put them forward, not knowing whether they were good or bad.

Until I knew these people, and the pure depth of their kindness, it was a continual grief to me to be a burden upon them. But when I came to understand them and their simple greatness, the only thing I was ashamed of was my own mistrust of them. Not that I expected ever that any harm would be done to me, only that I knew myself to have no claim on any one,

One day, when I was fit for nothing but to dwell on trouble, Sampson Gundry's grandson "Firm"—as he was called for Ephraim—ran up the stairs to the little room where I was sitting by myself.

"Miss Rema, will you come with us?" he said, in his deep, slow style of speech. "We are going up the mountain, to haul down the great tree to the mill."

"To be sure I will come," I answered gladly. "What great tree is it, Mr. Ephraim?"

"The largest tree anywhere near here—the one we cut down last winter. Ten days it took to cut it down. If I could have saved it, it should have stood. But grandfather did it to prove his rights. We shall have a rare job to lead it home, and I doubt if we can tackle it. I thought you might like to see us try."

In less than a minute I was ready, for the warmth and softness of the air made cloak or shawl unbearable. But when I ran down to the yard of the mill, Mr. Gundry, who was giving orders, came up and gave me an order too.

"You must not go like this, my dear. We have three thousand feet to go upward. The air will be sharp up there, and I doubt if we shall be home by nightfall. Run, Suan, and fetch the young lady's cloak, and a pair of thicker boots for change."

Suan Isco never ran. That manner of motion was foreign to her, at least as we accomplish it. When speed was required, she attained it by increased length of stride and great vigour of heel. In this way she conquered distance steadily, and with very little noise.

The air, and the light, and the beauty of the mountains were a sudden joy to me. In front of us all strode Sampson Gundry, clearing all tangles with a short, sharp axe, and mounting steep places as if two score were struck off his three score years and five. From time to time he turned round to laugh, or see that his men and trained bullocks were right; and then, as his bright eyes met my dark ones, he seemed to be sorry for the noise he made. On the other hand, I was ashamed of damping any one's pleasure by being there.

But I need not have felt any fear about this. Like all other children, I wrapped myself up too much in my own importance, and behaved as if my state of mind was a thing to be considered. But the longer we rose through the freedom and the height, the lighter grew the heart of every one, until the thick forest of pines closed round us, and we walked in a silence that might be felt.

Hence we issued forth upon the rough, bare rock, and after much trouble with the cattle, and some bruises, stood panting on a rugged cone, or crest, which had once been crowned with a Titan of a tree. The tree was still there, but not its glory; for, alas! the mighty trunk lay prostrate, a grander column than ever was, or will be, built by human hands. The tapering shaft stretched out of sight for something like a furlong, and the bulk of the butt rose over us so that we could

not see the mountains. Having never seen any such tree before, I must have been amazed if I had been old enough to comprehend it.

Sampson Gundry, large as he was, and accustomed to almost everything, collected his men and the whole of his team on the ground-floor or area of the stump, before he would say anything. Here we all looked so sadly small that several of the men began to laugh; the bullocks seemed nothing but racoons, or beavers, to run on the branches or the fibres of the tree; and the chains and the shackles, and the blocks and cranes, and all the rest of the things they meant to use, seemed nothing whatever, or at all to be considered, except as a spider's web upon this tree.

The sagacious bullocks, who knew quite well what they were expected to do, looked blank. Some rubbed their horns into one another's sadly, and some cocked their tails because they felt that they could not be called upon to work. The light of the afternoon sun came glancing along the vast pillar, and lit its dying hues—cinnamon, purple, and glabrous red, and soft grey where the lichens grew.

Everybody looked at Mr. Gundry, and he began to cough a little, having had lately some trouble with his throat. Then in his sturdy manner he spoke the truth, according to his nature. He set his great square shoulders against the butt of the tree, and delivered himself—

"Friends and neighbours, and hands of my own, I am taken in here, and I own to it. It serves me right for disbelieving what my grandson, Firm Gundry, said. I knew that the tree was a big one, of course, as everybody else does; but till you see a tree laid upon earth you get no grip of his girth, no more than you do of a man till he lieth a corpse. At the time of felling I could not come anigh him, by reason of an accident; and I had some words with this boy about it, which kept me away ever since that time. Firm, you were right, and I was wrong. It was a real shame, now I see it, to throw down the 'King of the Mountains.' But for all that, being down, we must use him. He shall be sawn into fifty-foot lengths. And I invite you all to come again, for six or seven good turns at him."

At the hearing of this a cheer arose, not only for the Sawyer's manly truth, but also for his hospitality; because on each of these visits to the mountain he was the host, and his supplies were good. But before the descent with the empty teams began, young Ephraim did what appeared to me to be a gallant and straightforward thing. He stood on the chine of the fallen monster, forty feet above us, having gained the post of vantage by activity and strength, and he asked if he might say a word or two.

"Say away, lad," cried his grandfather, supposing, perhaps, in his obstinate way—for truly he was very obstinate—that his grandson was going now to clear himself from art or part in the murder of that tree, an act which had roused indignation over a hundred leagues of lowland.

"Neighbours," said Firm, in a clear, young voice, which shook at first with diffidence, "we all have to thank you, more than I can tell, for coming to help us with this job. It was a job which required to be

done for legal reasons which I do not understand, but no doubt they were good ones. For that we have my grandfather's word; and no one, I think, will gainsay it. Now, having gone so far, we will not be beaten by it, or else we shall not be Americans."

These simple words were received with great applause; and an orator, standing on the largest stump to be found even in America, delivered a speech which was very good to hear, but need not now be repeated. And Mr. Gundry's eyes were moist with pleasure at his grandson's conduct.

"Firm knoweth the right thing to do," he said; "and like a man he doeth it. But whatever aileth you, Miss Rema, and what can'st see in the distance yonner? Never mind, my dear, then. Tell me by-and-by, when none of these folk is 'longside of us."

But I could not bear to tell him, till he forced it from me under pain of his displeasure. I had spied on the sky-line far above us, in the desert track of mountain, the very gap in which my father stood and bade me seek this landmark. His memory was true, and his eyesight also; but the great tree had been felled. The death of the "King of the Mountains" had led to the death of the king of mankind, so far as my little world contained one.

CHAPTER V.

UNCLE SAM.

THE influence of the place in which I lived began to grow on me. The warmth of the climate, and the clouds of soft and fertile dust, were broken by the refreshing rush of water, and the clear, soft green of leaves. We had fruit-trees of almost every kind, from the peach to the amber cherry, and countless oaks by the side of the river—not large, but most fantastic. Here I used to sit and wonder, in a foolish, childish way, whether on earth there was any other child so strangely placed as I was. Of course there were thousands far worse off, more desolate and destitute, but was there any more thickly wrapped in mystery and loneliness?

A wanderer as I had been for years, together with my father, change of place had not supplied the knowledge which flows from lapse of time. Faith, and warmth, and trust in others had not been dashed out of me by any rude blows of the world, as happens with unlucky children huddled together in large cities. My father had never allowed me much acquaintance with other children; for six years he had left me with a community of lay sisters, in a little town of Languedoc, where I was the only pupil, and where I was to remain as I was born, a simple heretic. Those sisters were very good to me, and taught me as much as I could take of secular accomplishment. And it was a bitter day for me when I left them for America.

For during those six years I had seen my father at long intervals, and had almost forgotten the earlier days when I was always with him.

I used to be the one little comfort of his perpetual wanderings, when I was a careless child, and said things to amuse him. Not that he ever played with me any more than he played with anything; but I was the last of his seven children, and he liked to watch me grow. I never knew it, I never guessed it, until he gave his life for mine; but, poor little common thing as I was, I became his only tie to earth. Even to me he was never loving, in the way some fathers are. He never called me by pet names, nor dandled me on his knee, nor kissed me, nor stroked down my hair and smiled. Such things I never expected of him, and therefore never missed them; I did not even know that happy children always have them.

But one thing I knew, which is not always known to happier children—I had the pleasure of knowing my own name. My name was an English one—Castlewood—and by birth I was an English girl, though of England I knew nothing, and at one time spoke and thought most easily in French. But my longing had always been for England, and for the sound of English voices and the quietude of English ways. In the chatter, and heat, and drought of South France some faint remembrance of a greener, cooler, and more silent country seemed to touch me now and then. But where in England I had lived, or when I had left that country, or whether I had relations there, and why I was doomed to be a foreign girl—all these questions were but as curling wisps of cloud on memory's sky.

Of such things (much as I longed to know a good deal more about them) I never had dared to ask my father; nor even could I, in a roundabout way, such as clever children have, get secondhand information. In the first place, I was not a clever child; for the next point, I never had underhand skill; and, finally, there was no one near me who knew anything about it. Like all other girls—and perhaps the very same tendency is to be found in boys—I had strong, though hazy, ideas of caste. The noble sense of equality, fraternity, and so on, seems to come later in life than childhood, which is an age of ambition. I did not know who in the world I was, but felt quite sure of being somebody.

One day, when the great tree had been sawn into lengths, and with the aid of many teams brought home, and the pits and the hoisting tackle were being prepared and strengthened to deal with it, Mr. Gundry, being full of the subject, declared that he would have his dinner in the mill-yard. He was anxious to watch, without loss of time, the settlement of some heavy timbers newly sunk in the river's bed, to defend the outworks of the mill. Having his good leave to bring him his pipe, I found him sitting upon a bench with a level fixed before him, and his empty plate and cup laid by, among a great litter of tools and things. He was looking along the level with one eye shut, and the other most sternly intent; but when I came near, he rose and raised his broad pith-hat, and made me think that I was not interrupting him.

"Here is your pipe, Uncle Sam," I said; for, in spite of all his formal

ways, I would not be afraid of him. I had known him now quite long enough to be sure that he was good and kind. And I knew that the world around these parts was divided into two hemispheres; the better half being of those who loved, and the baser half made of those who hated, Sawyer Sampson Gundry.

"What a queer world it is," said Mr. Gundry, accepting his pipe to consider that point. "Who ever would have dreamed, fifty years ago, that your father's daughter would ever have come with a pipe to light for my father's son?"

"Uncle Sam," I replied, as he slowly began to make those puffs which seem to be of the highest essence of pleasure, and wisps of blue smoke flitted through his white eyebrows and among the snowy curls of hair; "dear Uncle Sam, I am sure that it would be an honour to a princess to light a pipe for a man like you."

"Miss Rema, I should rather you would talk no nonsense," he answered very shortly, and he set his eye along his level, as if I had offended him. Not knowing how to assert myself, and declare that I had spoken my honest thoughts, I merely sat down on the bench and waited for him to speak again to me. But he made believe to be very busy, and scarcely to know that I was there. I had a great mind to cry, but resolved not to do it.

"Why, how is this? What's the matter?" he exclaimed at last, when I had been watching the water so long that I sighed to know where it was going to. "Why, Missy, you look as if you had never a friend in all the wide world left."

"Then I must look very ungrateful," I said; "for at any rate I have one, and a good one."

"And don't you know of anyone but me, my dear?"

"You, and Suan Isco, and Firm—those are all I have any knowledge of."

"'Tis a plenty—to my mind almost too many. My plan is to be a good friend to all, but not let too many be friends with me. Rest you quite satisfied with three, Miss Rema. I have lived a good many years, and I never had more than three friends worth a puff of my pipe."

"But one's own relations, Uncle Sam, people quite nearly related to us; it is impossible for them to be unkind, you know."

"Do I, my dear? Then I wish that I did. Except one's own father and mother, there is not much to be hoped for out of them. My own brother took a twist against me because I tried to save him from ruin; and if any man ever wished me ill, he did. And I think that your father had the same tale to tell—but there, I know nothing whatever about that."

"Now, you do, Mr. Gundry; I am certain that you do, and beg you to tell me; or rather I demand it. I am old enough now, and I am certain my dear father would have wished me to know everything. Whatever it was, I am sure that he was right; and until I know that I shall always be the most miserable of the miserable."

The Sawyer looked at me as if he could not enter into my meaning

and his broad, short nose and quiet eyes were beset with wrinkles of inquiry. He quite forgot his level and his great post in the river, and tilted back his ancient hat, and let his pipe rest on his big brown arm. "Lord bless me!" he said, "what a young gal you are! Or, at least, what a young Miss Rema. What good can you do, miss, by making of a rout? Here you be in as quiet a place as you could find, and all of us likes and pities you. Your father was a wise man to settle you here in this enlightened continent. Let the doggoned old folk t'other side of the world think out their own frustrations. A female young American you are now, and a very fine specimen you will grow. 'Tis the finest thing to be on all God's earth."

"No, Mr. Gundry, I am an English girl, and I mean to be an English-woman. The Americans may be more kind and generous, and perhaps my father thought so, and brought me here for that reason. And I may be glad to come back to you again when I have done what I am bound to do. Remember that I am the last of seven children, and do not even know where the rest are buried."

"Now, look straight afore you, Missy. What do you see yonner?" The Sawyer was getting a little tired, perhaps, of this long interruption.

"I see enormous logs, and a quantity of saws, and tools I don't even know the names of. Also I see a bright, swift river."

"But over here, Missy, between them two oaks. What do you please to see there, Miss Rema?"

"What I see there, of course, is a great saw-mill."

"But it wouldn't have been 'of course,' and it wouldn't have been at all, if I had spent all my days a-dwelling on the injuries of my family. Could I have put that there unekalled sample of water-power and human ingenuity together without labouring hard for whole months of a stretch, except upon the Sabbath, and laying awake night after night, and bending all my intellect over it? And could I have done that, think you now, if my heart was a-mooning upon family wrongs, and this, that, and the other?"

Here Sampson Gundry turned full upon me, and folded his arms, and spread his great chin upon his deer-skin apron, and nodded briskly with his deep grey eyes, surveying me in triumph. To his mind, that mill was the wonder of the world, and any argument based upon it, with or without coherence, was, like its circular saws, irresistible. And yet he thought that women cannot reason! However, I did not say another word just then, but gave way to him, as behoved a child. And not only that, but I always found him too good to be argued with—too kind, I mean, and large of heart, and wedded to his own peculiar turns. There was nothing about him that one could dislike, or strike fire at, and be captious; and he always proceeded with such pity for those who were opposed to him, that they always knew they must be wrong, though he was too polite to tell them so. And he had such a pleasant, paternal way of looking down into one's little thoughts when he put on his spectacles, that to say any more was to hazard the risk of ungrateful inexperience.

CHAPTER VI.

A BRITISHER.

THE beautiful Blue River came from the jagged depths of the mountains, full of light and liveliness. It had scarcely run six miles from its source before it touched our mill-wheel; but in that space and time it had gathered strong and copious volume. The lovely blue of the water (like the inner tint of a glacier) was partly due to its origin, perhaps, and partly to the rich, soft tone of the granite sand spread under it. Whatever the cause may have been, the river well deserved its title.

It was so bright and pure a blue, so limpid and pellucid, that it even seemed to outvie the tint of the sky which it reflected; and the myriad sparks of sunshine on it twinkled like a crystal rain. Plodding through the parched and scorching dust of the mountain-foot, through the stifling vapour and the blinding, ochrous glare, the traveller suddenly came upon this cool and calm delight. It was not to be descried afar, for it lay below the level; and the oaks and other trees of shelter scarcely topped the narrowcombe. There was no *cañon* (such as are, and some of them known over all the world, both to the north and south of it). The Blue River did not owe its birth to any fierce convulsion, but sparkled on its cheerful way without impending horrors. Standing here as a child, and thinking, from the manner of my father, that strong men never wept nor owned the conquest of emotion, I felt sometimes a fool's contempt for the gushing transport of brave men. For instance, I have seen a miner, or a tamer of horses, or a rough fur-hunter, or (perhaps the bravest of all) a man of science and topography, jaded, worn, and nearly dead with drought and dearth and choking, suddenly, and beyond all hope, strike on this buried Eden. And then he dropped on his knees and spread his starved hands upwards, if he could, and thanked the God who made him, till his head went round, and who knows what remembrance of loved ones came to him? And then, if he had any moisture left, he fell to a passion of weeping.

In childish ignorance I thought that this man weakly degraded himself, and should have been born a woman. But since that time I have truly learned that the bravest of men are those who feel their Maker's hand most softly, and are not ashamed to pay the tribute of their weakness to Him.

Living, as we did, in a lonely place, and yet not far from a track along the crest of the great Californian plain from Sacramento southward, there was scarcely a week which did not bring us some traveller needing comfort. Mr. Gundry used to be told that if he would set up a rough hotel, or house of call for cattle-drovers, miners, loafers, and so on, he might turn twice the money he could ever make by his thriving saw-mill. But he only used to laugh, and say that nature had made him too honest

for that ; and he never thought of charging anything for his hospitality, though if a rich man left a gold piece, or even a nugget, upon a shelf, as happened very often, Sawyer Gundry did not disdain to set it aside for a rainy day. And one of his richest or most lavish guests arrived on my account, perhaps.

It happened when daylight was growing shorter, and the red heat of the earth was gone, and the snow-line of distant granite peaks had crept already lower, and the chattering birds that spent their summer in our band of oak trees were beginning to find their food get short, and to prime swift wings for the lowland ; and I, having never felt bitter cold, was trembling at what I heard of it. For now it was clear that I had no choice but to stay where I was for the present, and be truly thankful to God and man for having the chance of doing so. For the little relics of my affairs—so far as I had any—had taken much time in arrangement, perhaps because it was so hard to find them. I knew nothing, except about my own little common wardrobe, and could give no information about the contents of my father's packages. But these, by dint of perseverance on the part of Ephraim (who was very keen about all rights), had mainly been recovered, and Mr. Gundry had done the best that could be done concerning them. Whatever seemed of a private nature, or likely to prove important, had been brought home to Blue River Mills ; the rest had been sold, and had fetched large prices, unless Mr. Gundry enlarged them.

He more than enlarged, he multiplied them, as I found out long afterwards, to make me think myself rich and grand, while a beggar upon his bounty. I had never been accustomed to think of money, and felt some little contempt for it—not indeed a lofty hatred, but a careless wonder why it seemed to be always thought of. It was one of the last things I ever thought of ; and those who were waiting for it were—until I got used to them—obliged in self-duty to remind me.

This, however, was not my fault. I never dreamed of wronging them. But I had earned no practical knowledge of the great world anywhere, much though I had wandered about, according to vague recollections. The duty of paying had never been mine. That important part had been done for me. And my father had such a horror always of any growth of avarice, that he never gave me sixpence.

And now, when I heard upon every side continual talk of money, from Suan Isco upward, I thought at first that the new world must be different from the old one, and that the gold mines in the neighbourhood must have made them full of it ; and once or twice I asked Uncle Sam ; but he only nodded his head, and said that it was the practice everywhere. And before very long I began to perceive that he did not exaggerate.

Nothing could prove this point more clearly than the circumstance above referred to—the arrival of a stranger, for the purpose of bribing even Uncle Sam himself. This happened in the month of November, when the passes were beginning to be blocked with snow, and those of the

higher mountain tracts had long been overwhelmed with it. On this particular day the air was laden with grey, oppressive clouds, threatening a heavy downfall, and instead of faring forth, as usual, to my beloved river, I was kept indoors, and even upstairs, by a violent snow-headache. This is a crushing weight of pain, which all new-comers, or almost all, are obliged to endure, sometimes for as much as eight-and-forty hours, when the first great snow of the winter is breeding, as they express it, overhead. But I was more lucky than most people are; for after about twelve hours of almost intolerable throbbing, during which the sweetest sound was odious, and the idea of food quite loathsome, the agony left me, and a great desire for something to eat succeeded. Suan Isco, the kindest of the kind, was gone downstairs at last, for which I felt ungrateful gratitude—because she had been doing her best to charm away my pain by low, monotonous Indian ditties, which made it ten times worse; and yet I could not find heart to tell her so.

Now, it must have been past six o'clock in the evening of the November day when the avalanche slid off my head, and I was able to lift it. The light of the west had been faint, and was dead; though often it used to prolong our day by the backward glance of the ocean. With pangs of youthful hunger, but a head still weak and dazy, I groped my way in the dark through the passage and down the stairs of redwood.

At the bottom, where a railed landing was, and the door opened into the house-room, I was surprised to find that, instead of the usual cheerful company enjoying themselves by the firelight, there were only two people present. The Sawyer sat stiffly in his chair of state, delaying even the indulgence of his pipe, and having his face set sternly, as I had never before beheld it. In the visitor's corner, as we called it, where people sat to dry themselves, there was a man, and only one.

Something told me that I had better keep back and not disturb them. The room was not in its usual state of comfort and hospitality. Some kind of meal had been made at the table, as always must be in these parts; but not of the genial, reckless sort which random travellers carried on without any check from the Sawyer. For he of all men ever born in a civilised age was the finest host, and a guest beneath his roof was sacred as a lady to a knight. Hence it happened that I was much surprised. Proper conduct almost compelled me to withdraw; but curiosity made me take just one more little peep, perhaps. Looking back at these things now, I cannot be sure of everything; and, indeed, if I could, I must have an almost supernatural memory. But I remember many things; and the headache may have cleared my mind.

The stranger, who had brought Mr. Gundry's humour into such stiff condition, was sitting in the corner, a nook where light and shadow made an eddy. He seemed to be perfectly unconcerned about all the tricks of the hearth-flame, presenting as he did a most solid face for any light to play upon. To me it seemed to be a weather-beaten face of a bluff and resolute man, the like of which we attribute to John Bull.

At any rate, he was like John Bull in one respect: he was sturdy and square, and fit to hold his own with any man.

Strangers of this sort had come (as Englishmen rove everywhere), and been kindly welcomed by Uncle Sam, who, being of recent English blood, had a kind of hankering after it, and would almost rather have such at his board than even a true-born American; and infinitely more welcome were they than Frenchman, Spaniard, or German, or any man not to be distinguished, as was the case with some of them. Even now it was clear that the Sawyer had not grudged any tokens of honour, for the tall, square brazen candlesticks, of Boston make, were on the table, and very little light they gave. The fire, however, was grandly roaring of stub-oak and pine antlers, and the black grill of the chimney-bricks was fringed with lifting filaments. It was a rich, ripe light, affording breadth and play for shadow; and the faces of the two men glistened, and darkened in their creases.

I was dressed in black, and could not be seen, though I could see them so clearly; and I doubted whether to pass through, upon my way to the larder, or return to my room and starve a little longer; for I did not wish to interrupt, and had no idea of listening. But suddenly I was compelled to stop; and to listen became an honest thing, when I knew what was spoken of; or, at any rate, I did it.

"Castlewood, Master Colonist; Castlewood is the name of the man that I have come to ask about. And you will find it worth your while to tell me all you know of him." Thus spoke the Englishman sitting in the corner; and he seemed to be certain of producing his effect.

"Wal," said Uncle Sam, assuming what all true Britons believe to be the universal Yankee tone, while I knew that he was laughing in his sleeve, "Squire, I guess that you may be right. Considerations of that 'ere kind deserves to be considered of."

"Just so. I knew that you must see it," the stranger continued bravely. "A stiff upper lip, as you call it here, is all very well to begin with. But all you enlightened members of the great republic know what is what. It will bring you more than ten years' income of your saw-mill, and farm and so on, to deal honestly with me for ten minutes. No more beating about the bush and fencing with me, as you have done. Now, can you see your own interest?"

"I never were reckoned a fool at that. Squire, make tracks, and be done with it."

"Then, Master Colonist, or Colonel—for I believe you are all colonels here—your task is very simple. We want clear proof, sworn properly, and attested duly, of the death of a villain—George Castlewood, otherwise the Honourable George Castlewood, otherwise Lord Castlewood. A man who murdered his own father, ten years ago this November. A man committed for trial for the crime, but who bribed his gaolers and escaped, and wandered all over the continent. What is that noise? Have you got rats?"

"Plenty of foreign rats, and native coons, and skunks, and other varmint. Wal, Squire, go on with it."

The voice of Uncle Sam was stern, and his face full of rising fury, as I, who had made that noise in my horror, tried to hush my heart with patience.

"The story is well known," continued the stranger; "we need make no bones of it. George Castlewood went about under a curse—"

"Not quite so loud, Squire, if you please. My household is not altogether seasoned."

"And perhaps you have got the young lady somewhere. I heard a report to that effect. But here you think nothing of a dozen murders. Now, Gundry, let us have no squeamishness. We only want justice, and we can pay for it. Ten thousand dollars I am authorised to offer for a mere act of duty on your part. We have an extradition treaty. If the man had been alive we must have had him. But as he has cheated the hangman by dying, we can only see his grave and have evidence. And all well-disposed people must rejoice to have such a quiet end of it. For the family is so well known, you see."

"I see," Mr. Gundry answered quietly, laying a finger on his lips. "Guess you want something more than that, though, Squire. Is there nothing more than the grave, to oblige a noble Britisher with?"

"Yes, Colonel; we want the girl as well. We know that she was with him in that caravan, or waggon-train, or whatever you please to call it. We know that you have made oath of his death, produced his child, and obtained his trunks, and drawn his share in the insurance job. Your laws must be queer to let you do such things. In England it would have taken at least three years, and cost a deal more than the things were worth, even without a Chancery suit. However, of his papers I shall take possession; they can be of no earthly use to you."

"To be sure. And possession of his darter too, without so much as a Chancery suit. But what is to satisfy me, Squire, agin' goin' wrong in this little transaction?"

"I can very soon satisfy you," said the stranger, "as to their identity. Here is their full, particular, and correct description—names, weights, and colours of the parties."

With a broad grin at his own exquisite wit, the bluff man drew forth his pocket-book, and took out a paper, which he began to smoothe on his knee quite leisurely. Meanwhile, in my hiding-place, I was trembling with terror and indignation. The sense of eavesdropping was wholly lost in that of my own jeopardy. I must know what was arranged about me; for I felt such a hatred and fear of that stranger, that sooner than be surrendered to him I would rush back to my room and jump out of the window, and trust myself to the trackless forest and the snowy night. I was very nearly doing so, but just had sense enough to wait and hear what would be said of me. So I lurked in the darkness, behind the rails, while the stranger read slowly and pompously.

The Laws of Dream-Fancy.

THE phenomena of dreams may well seem at first sight to form a world of their own, having no discoverable links of connection with the other facts of human experience. First of all there is the mystery of sleep, which quietly shuts all the avenues of sense and so isolates the mind from contact with the world outside. To gaze at the motionless face of a sleeper temporarily rapt, so to speak, from the life of sight, sound, and movement, which, being common to all, binds us together in mutual recognition and social action, has always something awe-inspiring. How unlike that external inaction, that torpor of sense and muscle, to the familiar waking life with its quick responsiveness and its overflowing energy! And then if we look at dreams from the inside, so to speak, we seem to find but the obverse face of the mystery. How inexpressibly strange does the late night-dream seem to one on waking. He feels he has been sojourning in an unfamiliar world, with an order of sights and a sequence of events quite unlike those of waking experience, and he asks himself in his perplexity where that once-visited region really lies, or by what magic power it was suddenly created for his fleeting vision. In truth, the very name of dream suggests something remote and mysterious, and when we want to characterize some impression or scene which by its passing strangeness filled us with wonder, we naturally call it dream-like.

The earliest theories respecting dreams illustrate very clearly this perception of the remoteness of dream-life from waking experience. The view held in common by the ancient world, according to Artemidorus, was that dreams were dim previsions of coming events. This great authority on dream interpretation (*oneirocritics*) actually defines a dream as "a motion or fiction of the soul in a diverse form signifying either good or evil to come;" and even a logician like Porphyry ascribed dreams to the influence of a good demon, who thereby warns us of the evils which another and bad demon is preparing for us.* The same mode of viewing dreams is quite common to-day, and many who pride themselves on a certain intellectual culture, and who imagine themselves to be free from the weakness of superstition, are apt to talk of dreams as of something uncanny, if not distinctly ominous. Nor is it surprising that phenomena which at first sight look so wild and unconditioned should still pass for miraculous interruptions of the natural order of events.

Yet in spite of this obvious and impressive element of the mysterious in

* A good deal of interesting information respecting dream theories may be found in Mr. Frank Seafeld's work, *The Literature and Curiosities of Dreams*.

dream-life, the scientific impulse to illuminate the less known by the better known has long since begun to play on this obscure subject. Even in the ancient world a writer might here and there be found, like Democritus or Aristotle, who was bold enough to put forward a natural and physical explanation of dreams. But it has been the work of modern science to provide something like an approximate solution of the problem. The careful study of mental life in its intimate union with bodily operations, and the comparison of dream-combinations with other products of the imagination, normal as well as morbid, have gradually helped to dissolve a good part of the mystery which once hung like an opaque mist about the subject. In this way our dream operations have been found to have a much closer connection with our waking experiences than could be supposed on a superficial view. The quaint chaotic play of images in dreams has been shown to illustrate mental processes and laws which are distinctly observable in waking thought, more especially the apparent objective reality of these visions has been accounted for, without the need of any supernatural cause, in the light of a vast assemblage of facts gathered from the by-ways, so to speak, of waking mental life.

We do not mean to say that dreams are even now fully explained. Were this so, the motive of the present essay would be wanting. Both the physiology and psychology of the subject are far from complete. This is seen in a striking manner in the present insolubility of the question—so frequently discussed since the time of Locke :—Whether dreams are co-extensive with sleep, or whether they are confined to the intermediate stages of imperfect slumber. While many physiologists incline to the latter view, some few—among whom we may name Sir Henry Holland—go with Leibnitz and the Cartesians in upholding the former supposition. The incompleteness of the physiological interpretation is seen, too, in the divided state of opinion respecting the precise physical conditions of sleep.* The most that can be called commonly accepted truth is that sleep is produced by a temporary congestion of the blood-vessels of the brain. But the precise steps by which this result is brought about are still unknown. With respect to the physiological conditions of dreams, there seems to be still less certainty. It is assumed of course that every dream answers to some partial and locally circumscribed excitation of the brain substance, but what may be the precise mode of this “automatic” activity is altogether a matter of conjecture. All that can be obtained is some more or less ingenious hypotheses, as for example the one recently put forward by Wundt, that the cerebral excitations are caused by the retardation of the circulation within the blood-vessels of the brain and the presence in the blood thus arrested of numerous products of decomposition.†

* “The proximate cause of sleep has ever been a disputed question.”—Article entitled “Pathology of Sleep” in the *Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 1862. This remark is quite as pertinent now as when it was written.

† *Physiologische Psychologie*, pp 188–191.

Such being the uncertainty of the physiological theory of dreams, it seems better for one who is not a physiologist to approach the subject from the other and psychological side. And this line of inquiry is all the more inviting inasmuch as psychologists are by no means agreed respecting the precise mental structure of dreams. It is seen by all that the play of mental function in dreams differs considerably from the exercises of the waking mind; but there is great difference of opinion as to the precise nature and amount of this difference. For example it is maintained by some that reason and will are wholly excluded from dreams

Dreams are the interludes which Fancy makes,
When monarch Reason sleeps this mimic wakes.

Others, again, among whom we may name the late Dr. Symonds, hold that dreams differ from waking thought, not in the number of faculties employed, but in the less degree of completeness of the mental processes. There is thus an opening for a careful psychological reconsideration of the phenomenon, and this is what I propose to effect in the present essay.

For our present purpose a dream may, perhaps, be defined as a group or series of groups of vivid imaginative representations of sensory, motor and emotional experiences, which simulates the form of real perceptions, and which, while appearing as a connected whole, presents its various elements in combinations very dissimilar to those of waking experience. There seem to be three main problems involved in this statement of the phenomenon. First of all, it may be asked, whence the mind of the sleeper draws the various elements of its dreams. Secondly, one may inquire into the causes of the exceptional order of sequence and the strange forms of composition, in which the images of the sleeper are wont to present themselves. Lastly, the question may be raised, why these products of imagination should be taken by the dreamer for objective realities.

Since the last problem is the one which is best understood, and has been most adequately explained, it may be well to dismiss it at once by a few remarks, after which we shall be free to concentrate our attention on the other and more intricate questions.

Modern psychology has taught us to regard the difference between a sensation and an idea, a perception and an imagination, as one of degree and not of kind. Our mental image of the setting sun, for example, is said to be simply a faint copy of the impressions produced by the real object in visual perception. Hence, though there is in the normal mind a clear and broad distinction between the two classes of mental phenomena, there is a considerable margin within which the two tend to become confused and scarcely distinguishable. One part of this region of incomplete separation lies in normal perception itself, for this operation always involves an element of representation or idea, though it seems to be altogether real and immediate. Thus when I appear to myself to see the downy softness of a rose's petal, I am in truth only vividly imagining it by help of previous sensations of touch.

The great field, however, for this confusion of idea and sensation is to be found in all excited states of the imagination, including pathological conditions. Under these circumstances, pure fancies of the mind, by acquiring a certain degree of vividness and persistence, become mistaken for real perceptions. Many excitable persons cannot read a ghost-story at a late hour of the evening without danger of a momentary illusion that they see or hear something uncanny and supernatural. In mental disorders the mistaking of some imagination for a real fact is one of the commonest symptoms. Whether the evil be a passing state of nervous irritability due to fatigue and exhaustion, or a permanent condition of mania, there is the same tendency to mistake a mental fiction for a fact, an imaginative representation for an immediate presentation. It is this last kind of effect which has the closest connection with dreams, and it will be well to try to elucidate it yet a little further.

In the normal mind our most vivid imaginations are prevented from imposing on us by what M. Taine calls the "corrective" of a present sensation.* When, for example, the weary prisoner indulges in a pleasing fancy picture of his home and family, the perception of the narrow boundaries of his cell at once corrects the tendency to illusion. So long as real sensations are present to the mind, and there is any distinguishable difference between the sensations and the images, so long is it difficult to lapse into this state of illusion. This result may occur either when the imagination has reached such an intensity as to be no longer distinguishable from the sensations of the moment, as in the illusions and hallucinations of the insane, or when, on the other hand, actual sensations are removed, so that the various fancies which run to the mind lack their proper corrective. In other words, ideas are recognised as such through a certain ratio of intensity to actual sensations; they fail to be recognised when this ratio is obliterated either by the elevation of the idea in intensity, or by the obscuration of the sensation.

It seems probable that the apparent reality of dream-fancy is a result of both these circumstances. One thing is certain, that when sleeping we are deprived to a large extent of external sensations, so that the mind loses its normal standard of comparison. On the other hand, it is exceedingly likely, if not certain, that the imaginations of our dreaming states have an absolute as well as a relative increase of intensity. It seems to be a plausible supposition that the cerebral elements excited in dream activity have an extraordinary degree of irritability, so that the stimulation of them, however it be effected, has as its consequence a peculiar intensity of the corresponding ideas. These considerations appear fully to account for the seeming reality of our dreaming fancies.

* M. Taine supposes that every image tends to pass into the semblance of an external perception, though in normal waking states this tendency is opposed and overcome by the stronger contradictory tendency of the sensation of the moment.—*On Intelligence*, Part I. p. 52.

We may now pass to the more intricate question respecting the sources and originating impulses of our dream-fancies.

David Hartley says the elements of dreams are derived from the three following sources: (a) impressions and ideas lately received; (b) states of the body, especially of the stomach during sleep; and (c) ideas restored by association. This serves very well as a rough classification of the exciting causes of dream images, though recent psychology assisted by physiological experiment may enable one to supply a more elaborate scheme.

The exciting causes of dream imagery may be broadly divided into two large classes, peripheral and central stimulations. By the former are meant those excitations which have their seat in the outlying parts of the nervous system, namely, the organs of sense, the muscular apparatus, and the vital organs, together with the external portions of the nerves connected with these. Central stimulations are such as do not depend in any way on these peripheral actions, but arise within the encephalic region itself. They are of two kinds, direct and indirect stimulations. The former depend entirely on the condition of the nerve elements (cells and connecting fibres) acted upon, and on the unknown influences (say those of the contents of the blood-vessels) exerted on them at the moment. The indirect stimulations arise as an extension of some previous excitation in the same or in some connected cerebral region. The former underlie many of the apparently spontaneous revivals of images of dreaming, and those fancies which depend on a recent impression or idea. The latter are the substratum of all ideas which rise in dream-consciousness through some link of association with a previous mental element, whether idea or sensation. Let us now review each of these classes in greater detail, and illustrate them by examples.

First of all, then, we have to examine how the several kinds of peripheral excitation brought about in the state of sleep serve as the prompters of dream image. And here the question which first suggests itself is whether actual sensations produced by external stimuli on the organs of sense play any part in this production. It is commonly supposed that the channels of our senses are wholly stopped during sleep, but this idea is incorrect. All of us probably can recall dreams in which a noise, a light, or an odour was an exciting cause. The bark of a dog, or the ticking of one's watch, frequently prompts the precise direction of dream-fancy. Dr. Beattie speaks of a man who could be made to dream about any subject by gently talking of it in his ear when sleeping. For our knowledge of the extent to which sensation may feed, so to speak, dream-fancy, we are greatly indebted to the researches of M. Alf. Maury, described in his elaborate and highly interesting volume entitled *Le Sommeil et les Rêves*. M. Maury made experiments on this subject by engaging a coadjutor to employ appropriate sensory stimuli on his organs of hearing and touch while he was asleep, immediately after which he was to be roused, so as to record the dream of the time. The results were very

curious. When his lips were tickled, he dreamt that a pitch-plaster was being torn from his face and lips; when a pair of tweezers was made to vibrate near his ear, he dreamt of bells, the tocsin, and of the events of June, 1848. The connection between the dream-fancy and the external sensation in these cases is sufficiently plain. It is probable that the sensations of touch and pressure due to the contact of the various bodily parts with their surroundings, and with one another, during sleep, are potent influences in the origination of dreams.

Along with objective sensations due to the action of external stimuli on the sensory organs, we must reckon subjective sensations which arise from internal stimulation within the organ itself. It is known that when all external light is withdrawn from the eye, the optic nerve remains in a state of partial excitation. Hence the phantasies which often float before the eye in the dark, and which Goethe and Johannes Müller were able to observe at will with great distinctness. These subjective images commonly arise, according to Helmholtz, from varying pressure on the nerve exerted by the blood in the retinal vessels, or from a chemical action of the blood owing to its altered composition. Similarly it has been maintained that the extremities of the nerves of hearing, smell, and taste, may be acted on in the absence of properly external causes. Thus the flow of blood in the vessels of the ear is heard as a dull roar, and the changing condition of the saliva on the surface of the tongue and palate may give rise to distinct sensations of taste. Once more, variations in the state of the circulation and functional activity of the skin are accompanied with a number of sensations as of objects touching, tickling, or creeping over its surface. All these subjective sensations probably furnish a considerable part of the raw material of dreams. Though little remarked during waking hours, when the mind is controlled by the more powerful excitations occasioned by external objects and their movements, these vague feelings may be impressive elements in the circumscribed consciousness of the sleeper. More particularly the predominance of visual imagery in dream-fancy, which is expressed in one of the commonest names for a dream, namely, "vision," points to the conclusion that the subjective stimulations of the optic nerve—which may be intensified during sleep by the condition of the retinal blood-vessels—play a prominent part in dream production. This conjecture is confirmed, as Wundt has recently pointed out, by the fact that we so often see in our dreams a multitude of like or exactly similar objects, for such a crowd of images exactly answers to the diffused 'light-chaos' which often reveals itself to the waking eye with the most complete external darkness.

Next to the influence of actions on the extremities of the nerves of sense, there comes that of excitations of the nerves which are connected with the voluntary muscles, and which regulate our various movements. We need not enter into the difficult question how far the "muscular sense" is connected with the activity of the motor nerves, and how far with sensory fibres attached to the muscular or the adjacent tissues. Suffice it to say,

that an actual movement, a resistance to an attempted movement, or a mere disposition to movement, whether consequent on a surplus of motor energy or on a sensation of discomfort or fatigue in the part to be moved, somehow or other makes itself known to our minds even when we are deprived of the assistance of vision. And these feelings of active energy and of movement are common initial impulses in our dream experiences. It is quite a mistake to suppose that dreams are built up out of the purely passive sensations of sight and hearing. A close observation will show that in nearly every dream we imagine ourselves either moving among the objects we perceive or striving to move when some weighty obstacle obstructs us. All of us are familiar with the common forms of nightmare in which we strive hopelessly to flee from some menacing evil, and this fancy, it may be presumed, frequently comes from a feeling of strain in the muscles, due to an awkward disposition of the limbs during sleep. The common dream illusion of falling down a vast abyss is referred by Wundt to an involuntary extension of the foot of the sleeper, and the scarcely less common imagination of flight to the rhythmic play of the semi-voluntary movements of respiration.

Besides the sensations received through the proper organs of sense and the feelings connected with the muscles, our dream-consciousness is liable to be stimulated by numerous other feelings called "systemic" or "organic" sensations, which are attached to the activities of the various bodily organs. Examples of this effect will readily recur to the reader who has been accustomed to reflect but very slightly on his dreams. Not to speak of the famous dream which Hood traces to an excessive indulgence at supper the preceding evening, one may recall the many dreams excited by feelings of oppression in the heart and lungs, by sensations of pain and giddiness in the head, by toothache and so on. A German writer, Herr Volkelt, in an interesting volume on *Dream-Fancy*,* says it is not uncommon for a faint sensation of toothache to prompt images having a certain resemblance to the two rows of teeth, and quotes such a dream from Scherner, in which there appeared two rows of fair boys standing opposite one another, then attacking one another, resuming their original position, and so on. The present writer has frequently had grotesque fancies, such as that all his teeth became suddenly loose and fell out, which he has afterwards been able to connect with sensations of the teeth and gums. Sensations of temperature are very apt to give a direction to dream-fancy. A feeling of excessive warmth suggests images of stoves, furnaces, burning houses, and so on. Many dreams are distinctly traceable to varying conditions of the several secreting organs and of the conducting apparatus of the excretions. Into these we need not enter. Enough has probably been said to show how large a quantity of material our dream-fancy derives from this lower region of bodily sensation.

* *Die Traum-Phantasie*. By Dr. Johannes Volkelt.

We may now pass to the second great fountain of dream-life, the cerebral excitations, which are central or automatic, not depending on movements transmitted from the periphery of the nervous system. Of these stimulations the first class is direct, and must be supposed to be due to some unknown influence exerted by the state of nutrition of the cerebral elements, or the action of the contents of the blood-vessels on these elements. That such action does prompt a large number of dream-images may be regarded as fairly certain. First of all, it seems impossible to account for all the images of dreaming fancy as secondary phenomena connected by many and various links of association with the foregoing classes of sensation. However fine and invisible many of the threads which hold together our ideas may be, they will hardly explain, one suspects, the profusion and picturesque variety of dream imagery. Secondly, we are able in certain cases to infer with a fair amount of certainty that our dream image is due to such central stimulation. The common occurrence that we dream of the persons and events, of the anxieties and enjoyments of the preceding day, appears to show that when the cerebral elements are predisposed to a certain kind of activity, as they are after having been engaged for some time in this particular work, they are liable to be excited by some stimulating influence brought to bear on them during sleep. And if this is so, it is not improbable that many of the apparently forgotten images of persons and places which return with such vividness in dreams are excited by a mode of stimulation which is for the greater part confined to sleep. I say 'for the greater part,' because even in our indolent, listless moments of waking existence such seemingly forgotten ideas sometimes return as though by a spontaneous movement of their own and by no discoverable play of association.

The second division of these central stimulations, which I have called the indirect, includes no doubt a very large number of our dream-images. There must, of course, be always some primary cerebral excitation, whether that of a present peripheral stimulation, or that which has been termed central and spontaneous; but when once this first link of the imaginative chain is supplied, other links may be added in large numbers through the operation of the forces of association. One may indeed safely say that the large proportion of the contents of every dream arrive in this way. The simplest type of dream excited by a present sensation contains these elements. Thus when the present writer dreamt, as a consequence of a loud barking in the night, that a dog approached him when lying down, and began to lick his face, the play of the associative forces was apparent. A mere sensation of sound called up the appropriate visual image, this again the representation of a characteristic action, and so on. So it is with the dreams whose first impulse is some central or spontaneous excitation. A momentary sight of a face, or even the mention of a name, during the preceding day, may give the start to dream activity; but all subsequent members of the

series owe their revival to a tension, so to speak, in the fine threads which bind together, in so complicated a way, our impressions and ideas.

The subject of mental association naturally conducts us to the next problem in the interpretation of dream-life, the laws which govern the ordering and shaping of the various elements of our dream-pictures. It is commonly said that dreams are a grotesque dissolution of all order, a very chaos and whirl of images without any discoverable connection. On the other hand, a few claim for the mind in sleep a power of arranging and grouping its incongruous elements in definite, even though very unlife-like, sensuous representations. Each of these views is correct within certain limits; that is to say, there are dreams in which the strangest disorder seems to prevail, and others in which one detects the action of a central control. Yet, speaking generally, sequences of dream-thought are determined by certain circumstances and laws, and so far are not haphazard and wholly chaotic. We have now to inquire into the laws of these successions; and, first of all, may ask how far the known laws of association, together with the peculiar conditions of the sleeping state, are able to account for the various modes of dream-combination. We have already regarded mental association as adding a new and large store of dream-imagery; we have now to consider it as giving a certain direction or order of succession to our dream-elements.

First of all, then, in the case of all the less elaborately ordered dreams, in which sights and sounds appear to succeed one another in the wildest dance, the mind may be regarded as purely passive, and the mode of sequence be referred to the action of association complicated by the ever-recurring introduction of new initial impulses, both peripheral and central. These are the dreams in which we are conscious of being perfectly passive, either as spectators of a strange pageant, or as borne away by some apparently extraneous force through a series of the most diverse experiences. The flux of images in these dreams is very much the same as that in certain waking conditions, in which we relax attention, both external and internal, and yield ourselves to the spontaneous play of memory and fancy.

If the reader thinks it impossible that all the most incoherent successions of dreams are due to certain mental laws, he should carefully study the nature and range of the principles of association. According to these, any idea may, under certain circumstances, call up another, if the corresponding impressions have only once occurred together, or if the ideas have any degree of resemblance, or, finally, if only they stand in marked contrast with one another. Any accidental coincidence of events, such as meeting a person at a particular foreign resort, and any insignificant resemblance between objects, sounds, &c. may thus supply a path, so to speak, from fact to dream-fancy. In our waking states these innumerable outlets are practically closed by the supreme energy of the coherent groups of impressions furnished us from the world without through our organs of sense, and also by the volitional control of

internal thought in obedience to the pressure of practical needs and desires. In dream-life both of these influences are withdrawn, so that delicate threads of association, which have no chance, so to speak, in our waking states, now exert their fine potency. Little wonder then that the ties which hold together these dream-pictures should escape detection, since even in our waking thought we so often fail to see the connection which makes us pass in recollection from a name to a visible scene, or perhaps to an emotional vibration.

It is worth considering for a moment how great an apparent disorder must break in on our thought when the binding force of resemblance has unchecked play. In waking thought we have to connect things according to their essential resemblance, classifying objects and events for purposes of knowledge or action, according to their widest or their most important points of similarity. In sleep, on the contrary, the slightest touch of resemblance may engage the mind and affect the direction of its fancy. In a sense we may be said, when dreaming, to *discover* mental affinities between impressions and feelings. Among these links of affinity we must not overlook those which hold together analogous states of feeling, as bodily uneasiness and emotional distress. Many of the successions of ideas set in movement by bodily sensations during sleep are explained by this thread of connection.

The force of even the lesser degrees of similarity among impressions is well illustrated in many of those odd transformations of image which occur in dreams. A person often seems to our dream-fancy, by a kind of metempsychosis, to assume the shape of another, and the dreamer not unfrequently blends in this way his own bodily appearance with that of another. So scenes, such as brilliantly-lit halls, gay assemblages, impressive landscapes, melt away into others without any sensible break. Such "transformation scenes" answer probably to the transition of a mental image to another, when both have some element in common.

We do not pretend, be it understood, to explain why, in every case, the action of association should take this or that particular direction rather than some other. There are myriads of associative ramifications to some of our most familiar images, such as those of our relatives, homes, &c., and it is hopeless to attempt to say why one direction should be taken rather than another, and especially why a slender thread should pull, when a stronger cord fails to do so. To take an example, names, when heard in our waking moments, call up at once mental pictures of the corresponding objects, and our thought is carried away in this direction. In sleep, however, a familiar name may call up a similar name, and so produce the oddest sequence of ideas. Thus M. Maury tells us that he has passed from one set of images to another through some similarity of names, as that between *corps* and *cor*.

In the absence of certain knowledge, we may have recourse to hypothesis, and attribute these seemingly random selections among many links of association to different degrees of irritability in the correspond-

ing cerebral elements, and to various grades of stimulation exerted at the moment by the contents of the blood-vessels. We may easily suppose that, at any given moment, among many elements alike connected with some actually excited one, some are, from their state of nutrition or from their surrounding influences, more powerfully predisposed to excitation than others; and hence, it may be, the apparent arbitrariness of the associative forces in dreams.

One word, in completing this slight analysis of our more passive dreams, as to the influence of the peripheral and central stimulations on the course of dream-fancy. We may suppose that these initial impulses are continually recurring during a dream, and so we may understand much of the incoherence of dream successions. For example, I may be dreaming of a ball-room, with its dazzling brilliance and its interwoven movements. If at the same moment, consciousness is affected through a peripheral excitation by a sensation of a disagreeable sound, say the clatter of the window or the moaning of the wind, this may give rise to the oddest intermixture of images. I might, for example, dream on that somebody was beginning to shatter the furniture of the ball-room, or that it was suddenly invaded by a throng of wailing women, and so on.

Yet if the processes of association, together with the recurring interruption of these by peripheral or central excitations, account for one class of dream, they do not so easily explain the order of events in many of our more finished, one might almost say, more artistic dreams. Here the several parts of the dream appear somehow or other to fall together into a whole scene or series of events, which, though it may be very incongruous and absurdly impossible from a waking point of view, nevertheless makes a single object for the dreamer's internal vision. This plastic force, which selects and binds together our unconnected dream-images, has frequently been referred to as a mysterious spiritual faculty, under the name of "creative fancy." Thus Cudworth says, in his *Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality*, "that dreams are many times begotten by the phantastical power of the soul itself . . . is evident from the orderly connection and coherence of imaginations which many times are continued in a long chain or series." One may find a good deal of mystical writing on the nature and activity of this faculty, especially in German literature. Let us see whether these higher operations in dream-construction can be analysed into simpler mental actions.

In the first place, then, it is possible to give to association a more extended signification, so as to include operations which are frequently referred to the active reason. When, for example, the several impressions simultaneously made on my retina arrange themselves as elements of an external order, having certain space relations of situation, distance, &c., the effect may be said to follow from the action of association. An impression received through any particular nerve fibre represents, through numerous previous experiences, certain definite relations in space. Hence the perfect space order which reigns in many of our dreams, and

which serves to give such a degree of objective reality to our fancies, must be referred to association as much as any accidental sequence of ideas. The only difference in this case is that the connection is so close and the revival of the associated factor so instantaneous. Owing to the predominance of visual images in dreams (which is doubtless connected with the special activity of the organ of vision in waking life, and with its high degree of susceptibility to subjective stimulation), these inferences respecting locality play an important part in dreams. It has often been asked, why, when dreaming, we tend to project our own feelings and bodily conditions into other objects. The answer to this is probably to be found in the presence of visual sensations and images together with their objective and local interpretations.

But again, association may present itself, not simply as a definite tendency in an impression or idea to restore some second idea, but also as an indefinite tendency to restore some one among a group of ideas. For example, if, when walking in a dark night, a few points in my retina are suddenly impressed by rays of light, I am prepared, I may even expect to see something above and below, to the right and to the left of this object, that is to say, to have my retina impressed in the adjacent part. Why is this? In part, perhaps, because there is some innate understanding, so to speak, among all contiguous nerve fibres, which shows itself now and again in the curious phenomena of irradiation and associated sensations. In part, too, because in all my individual experience, the stimulation of any retinal point has been connected with the stimulation of adjoining points, either simultaneously, by some other object, or successively by the same object as the eye moves over it. Hence we can understand that when any optic fibres are excited during sleep, and images having corresponding *loci* in space float before the imagination, there is a predisposition to see other objects which arrange themselves in adjacent parts of the visible space. The particular visual image which happens to recur is, of course, determined by the special conditions of the moment, by bodily sensations or spontaneous central excitations, or lastly, by definite associations with preceding images. What this disposition to associative action among adjoining nerve fibres of the same organ effects, is to give a certain local habitation to the image which happens to be thus revived.

Just as there are such dispositions to united action among various parts of one organ of sense, so there may be among different organs, which are either connected originally in the infant organism, or have communications opened up by frequent co-excitation of the two. Such links there certainly are between the organs of taste and smell, and between the ear and the muscular system. A new odour often sets us asking how the object would taste, and a series of sounds commonly disposes us to movement of some kind or another. How far there may be finer threads of connection between other organs, such as the eye and the ear, which do not betray themselves amid the stronger forces of waking mental life, one

cannot say. Whatever their number, it is plain that they will exert their influence, within the comparatively narrow limits of dream-life, by giving a general bent to the order of those images which happen to be called up by special circumstances. Thus if I were dreaming that I heard some inspiring music, and at the same time an image of some friend was anyhow excited, my dream-fancy might not improbably make this person perform some strange sequence of movements.

A narrower field for these general associative dispositions may be found in the tendency, on the reception of an impression of a given character, to look for a certain kind of second impression: though the exact nature of this is unknown. Thus, for example, the form and colour of a new flower suggest a scent, and the perception of a human form vaguely calls up an idea of vocal utterances. These general tendencies of association appear to me to be most potent influences in our dream-life. The many strange human forms which float before our dream-fancy are apt to talk, move, and behave like familiar men and women, however little they resemble their actual prototypes, and however little individual consistency of character is preserved by each of them. Special conditions determine what they shall say or do; the general associative disposition accounts for their saying or doing something.

We thus seem to find in the purely passive processes of association some ground for that degree of natural coherence and rational order which our more mature dreams commonly possess. These processes explain, too, that odd mixture of rationality with improbability, of natural order and incongruity, which characterizes our dream-combinations.

Nevertheless, I quite agree with Herr Volkelt that association, even in the most extended meaning, cannot explain all in the shaping of our dream-pictures. The "phantastical power" which Cudworth talks about clearly includes something besides. It is a gratuitous supposition that, when dreaming, there is no activity of will, and consequently no direction of the intellectual processes. This supposition, which has been maintained by numerous writers, from Dugald Stewart downwards, seems to be based on the fact that we frequently find ourselves in dreams striving in vain to move the whole body or a limb. But this only shows, as M. Maury remarks in the work already referred to, that our volitions are frustrated through the inertia of our bodily organs, not that these volitions do not take place. In point of fact, the dreamer, not to speak of the somnambulist, is often conscious of voluntarily going through a series of actions. This exercise of volition is shown unmistakably in the well-known recorded instances of extraordinary intellectual achievements in dreams, as Condillac's composition of a part of his *Cours d'Etudes*. No one would maintain that such a process was possible in the absence of intellectual action carefully directed by the will. And something of this same control shows itself in all our more fully developed dreams.

The active side of the mind manifests itself unmistakably in our dream-life in the form of *attention*. Although sleep involves the with-

drawal of attention from the external channels of knowledge, it does not hinder its being concentrated on the internal processes of imaginative representation. In truth all who can recall their dreams know that they are frequently aware of having exercised their attention on the images presented to them in sleep. I frequently have a feeling on waking that I have been striving to see a beautiful object which threatened to escape my perceptions, or to catch faint and receding sounds of preternatural sweetness, and in some cases dreamers retain a recollection of the feeling of strain connected with the exercise of attention during dreaming.

Now this exercise of attention may either be a purely reflex action or may approximate to a properly voluntary operation. It is reflex when excited by the mere impressiveness of the image which happens to reveal itself to consciousness. In this case its effect is to fix and hold the image, and so to give it greater intensity, distinctness, and persistence. In other instances, this exercise of attention may bear a closer resemblance to the voluntary processes, properly so called. This is the case when it serves to select one from among a crowd of competing images, on account of some relation of fitness to preceding stages of the dream. This selection is carried on rapidly and with the minimum of consciousness in the case of every creative poet, and its presence in dream construction helps to account for that measure of coherence which certainly marks our most striking dreams.

There are two principal motives to this selective action of attention. The first is the impulse to seek unity and consistency among the heterogeneous elements of dream-consciousness; the second the instinct for an emotional harmony. A word or two will be sufficient to explain the operation of each of these forces.

Whenever we are attentively watching a scene or incident in waking life, we are continually looking on and anticipating the order of events; and this concentration of attention under the stimulating force of a more or less definite expectation has an appreciable effect on the subsequent perceptions. If, for example, a lover is eagerly expecting his mistress at some sylvan trysting-place, he will be very apt to see a lady's robe or face in any object which happens to have but the faintest resemblance to these things, such as a patch of tree stripped of its bark.* When our reasoning faculties are fully active, these momentary illusions are at once corrected by a new and more exact observation of the reality. But when sleeping the case is different. The image that happens to present itself to consciousness is not, like an external impression, something fixed and unchangeable so far as we are concerned. It is itself the product of internal imagination, and is therefore highly modifiable by any mental force

* When the sensation is less sharply defined, the play of ideas and of attention may serve to modify it to an almost unlimited extent. Thus Goethe tells us that he was able to impose a type on his subjective visual sensations or phantasms, transforming them into flowers, &c., according to his fancy.

brought to bear on it. This fact throws light on the influence of attention and expectation. The dreamer's mind is absorbed, we will suppose, in watching some shifting scene, as a procession or a battle. New images crowd in from the two sources of peripheral and central stimulation. The pre-existing group of images gives a certain bent to attention, disposing the mind to see in every new dream-object a connected element, an integral factor of the vision. Thus the degree of coherence which we commonly observe in our dreams, may be referred to the reciprocal modification of images by their respective associative forces, both definite and special and indefinite and general, under the controlling influence of attention, which again is stimulated by a semi-conscious impulse to secure unity. In this way whole scenes and chains of events are built up. When these aggregates reach a certain fulness and distinctness, they become dominant influences; so that any fresh intruding image is at once transformed and attached more or less closely to the previous group.

This process is clearly illustrated in a curious dream recorded by Professor Wundt. Before the house is a funeral procession: it is the burial of a friend, who has in reality been dead for some time past. The wife of the deceased bids him and a friend go to the other side of the street and join the procession. After she had gone away, his acquaintance remarks to him: "She only said that because the cholera rages over yonder, and she wants to keep this side of the street for herself." Then comes an attempt to flee from the region of the cholera. Returning to his house, he finds the procession gone, but the street strewn with rich nosegays, and there are crowds of men who seem to be funeral attendants, and who, like himself, are hastening to join the procession. These are, oddly enough, dressed in red. When hurrying on, it occurs to him that he has forgotten to take a wreath for the coffin. Then he wakes up with beating of the heart.

The sources of this dream are, according to Wundt, as follows:—First of all, he had, on the previous day, met the funeral procession of an acquaintance. Again, he had read of cholera breaking out in a certain town. Once more, he had spoken about the particular lady with this friend, who had narrated facts which proved the selfishness of the former. The hastening to flee from the infected neighbourhood and to overtake the procession was prompted by the sensation of heart-beating. Finally, the crowd of red bier-followers, and the profusion of nosegays, owed their origin to subjective visual sensations—the "light-chaos" which often appears in the dark.

Let us now see for a moment how these various elements became fused into a connected chain of events. First of all, we may suppose the image of the procession occupies the dreamer's mind. From quite another source the image of the lady enters consciousness, bringing with it that of her deceased husband and of the friend who has recently been talking about her. These new elements adapt themselves to the scene, through the play of the reciprocal modifications already spoken of. Thus the idea

of the lady's husband recalls the fact of his death, and the pre-existing scene easily suggests the idea that he is now the person buried. The next step is very interesting. The image of the lady is associated with the idea of selfish motives; this would tend to suggest a variety of actions, but the one which becomes a factor of the dream is that which is adapted to the other existing images, namely the procession on the further side of the street, and a vague representation of cholera (which last, like the image of the funeral, is due to an independent central excitation). That is to say, the request of the lady, and its interpretation, are a *resultant* of a number of reciprocal actions, under the sway of a lively internal attention. Once more, the feeling of oppression of the heart, and the subjective stimulation of the optic nerve might suggest numberless images besides those of anxious flight and of red-clad men and nosegays; they suggest these, and not others, in this case, through the force of the pre-existing mental images, which, acting through attention, select from among many tendencies of reproduction those which are congruous with themselves.

It may be added that this process of adaptation and fusion is sometimes pursued with a fuller degree of conscious purpose. I am often able upon waking to recall a feeling of being confused by a crowd of incongruous images, and of striving to see their proper relations. And this endeavour probably includes the selection and powerful modification of the images according to the mutual attractions which they derive from the order of our past waking experiences.

Let us now glance at the second force, which contributes so greatly to the unity and coherence of our dream pictures, the impulse to emotional harmony. If any emotion, whether of a pleasurable or a painful character, gets a certain footing in consciousness, it begins to play the tyrant in relation to our ideas and even our perceptions, by predisposing attention towards those mental images which harmonise with the state of feeling. This is not, strictly speaking, a case of the voluntary exercise of attention, since we often feel the result to be painful, and strive to turn our thoughts to other objects. Yet it is carried on in much the same way as though there were a deliberate resolve to select images of a certain emotional character. It is a common observation that a man carried away by fear can only represent to himself as probable or actual that which is terrible and which consequently nourishes the dominant emotion. The same is true in a less striking degree of the pleasurable emotions, as love. In the most ardent moments of affection, we are incapacitated for seeing what is not beautiful and loveable in the object of the affection. In this way a dominant feeling gives an emotional unity to the images of the brain; and this is the unity which holds together the many otherwise disconnected ideas of a lyric poem. Now, a state of feeling is so frequently at the foundation of our dreams that one might plausibly argue that there are no dreams which are not profoundly coloured in this way. For my own part, at least, I find in all my recollected dreams the unmistak-

able traces of such a controlling influence. In the dream of Professor Wundt, already narrated, one may detect a certain thread of emotional unity. The influence of anxiety and fear, traceable probably to the sensations of the heart, binds together the images of the funeral, the cholera, the crafty design of the lady, the flight, and the omission to bring a wreath. In this way a further selective and adaptative force is brought into play, which crosses and complicates the action of the others.

It is to be remarked that this emotional thread of unity does not necessarily consist of only one definite variety of feeling, such as love or terror. Feelings have certain affinities among themselves, apart from the common characters of the pleasurable and painful, by reason of which they easily pass the one into the other. Thus, the so-called bodily "feelings" have their analogous counterparts in "mental emotions." A state of bodily irritation is, as Mr. Darwin has remarked, very like the feeling of mental perplexity. The pleasurable elation which arises from the relief of bodily pressure, or the obstruction of an organic process, is closely akin to an emotion of liberty, or the joyous sense of success after difficulty and doubtful endeavour. Hence, if a certain state of feeling is anyhow excited, it may become the central point for a whole circle of variegated images. And this is what very frequently happens in dreams. An emotion of grief, caused by the recent death of a friend, may call up images of other distressing events, such as failure in some ambitious project, loss of property, and so on. The most common source of these emotional states during sleep is the region of bodily sensations, more particularly those of the painful class. Through their analogies with mental emotions these organic sensations excite or attract groups of widely-unlike images, agreeing only in their fitness to sustain one common tone of feeling. Every reflective dreamer will be able to trace these connecting threads in dreams which would otherwise seem to lack all coherence.

There is only one other aspect of dream-fancy which need occupy us here, and of this it will suffice to say very little. I refer to the tendency of dream-consciousness to magnify and exaggerate the feelings and images which present themselves. One side of this exaggeration has already been dealt with in accounting for the objective reality ascribed to dream ideas. We have now to consider, not why these ideas should be taken for realities, but why they should be so disproportionate to the sensations and other feelings which are their exciting causes, and to the experiences of waking life which serve as their source and prototype. This characteristic of dream-fancy has frequently been dwelt on, and has been fully illustrated by Herr Volkelt in the work already referred to. To give an example or two:—In interpreting bodily sensations, there is often the most grotesque exaggeration. A movement of a foot is taken for a fall of the whole body down some terrible abyss. In M. Maury's experiments, as I have already remarked, when the sleeper's lips were tickled the sensation transformed itself into an imagination of some excruciating torture. Again, the objects of our waking emotions seem to grow and

expand in our dreams. The sick friend who causes us a solicitude becomes to our dream-fancy overwhelmed with the most terrible sufferings, or the classic city in which we lately lingered returns to us in sleep, with its warm tints and picturesque outlines, beautiful above all earthly reality. To our frequent dream-terror forms appear of so vast a size and dire a mien, that we try in vain, perhaps, to connect them with any waking perceptions. In many dreams, as Herr Volkelt observes, we may clearly observe the process of exaggeration going on. In dreams of terror, to which, like many other children, I was greatly liable, I frequently saw forms which gradually swelled out into unearthly proportions. Another form of this process is illustrated in De Quincey's dreams, in which space seemed to swell before his eyes, through a crowding in of multitudes of objects on his vision. This crowding of images is frequently referable to the subjective stimulation of the optic nerve, which produces the semblance of a number of points of light, called by the Germans the "light-dust." It is very common, too, in dreams, to have a succession of images, of which each new member is more imposing or more impressive than the preceding. Here is an example from Volkelt. He dreamt he gave up his hat and overcoat to an official at the cloak-room of a place of amusement, and noticed that the recipient instantly changed the hat for another. This process of substitution went on till he completely lost sight of his own articles. Thereupon somebody carried a heap of articles of attire out of the cloak-room. He inferred that there was an organized body of thieves at the back, and turned to a policeman. Immediately he became involved in a hand-to-hand conflict with the thieves, and finally was stabbed in the abdomen. Here there is a clear ascending gradation in respect of the terrifying character of the dream.

These various forms of the exaggerating tendency in dreams are to be accounted for by more than one consideration. First of all, since in sleep the area of distinct consciousness or of attention is so greatly circumscribed, the few sensations which happen to penetrate it naturally become exaggerated. Just as the click of a window is magnified at night when we are seeking the quiet of sleep and our attention is not diverted by other impressions, so any bodily sensation or emotion which enters into the dreamer's consciousness and wholly engages his attention becomes larger, deeper, and intenser than it would be in a waking condition of the mind.

But again, our sensations and other feelings are estimated during our waking states by comparison with one another, and when this comparison is wanting the sensation assumes an undefined and large aspect. Thus sensations of pressure received through parts of the bodily surface which are not habituated to such impressions invariably appear too large. So the cavity formed by the loss of a tooth seems too large to the tongue at first, because its discriminative sensibility in the estimation of distance is but feebly developed. Once more, when under the momentary excitement of a pleasurable or painful emotion, and incapable of

judging the feeling by a recollection of previous like emotions, we invariably over-estimate its magnitude. The present sunset always seems more wonderful and more splendid than all its predecessors. Now in dreams sensations and emotions are in a pre-eminent degree isolated feelings, which are incapable of being measured by the play of those ideal or reproductive elements which render our waking impressions distinct and sharp, and hence they tend to appear too large through being undefined. As a consequence of this they assume a greatly transformed aspect, presenting themselves through images which are absurdly disproportionate to their real causes.

Finally, one of the principal exaggerating forces in dream-fancy is the action of a persistent emotional state. We have already seen how such a state serves to single out and to unite the images of the brain. Now this process necessarily involves accumulation and exaggeration. Each new image attracted by a dominant feeling reacts on this feeling, intensifying it, and this enables it to go on piling image on image. Since this process in dream-life is generally quite unchecked by any sense of probability or rational congruity, the result is a scene or an action which far transcends those of our real experience. It should be observed, too, that the high degree of fusibility which belongs to our dream-images contributes to this effect of preternatural exaggeration, since through the blending of a number of images of a certain emotional colour composite images arise which greatly transcend in impressiveness those of our waking experience.

These considerations help to explain what some writers call the "symbolic" nature of dream images. This idea has, no doubt, been greatly exaggerated, as when a German writer, Scherner, contends that the various bodily sources of sensations in dreams reveal themselves to consciousness under the symbol of a house or series of buildings, so that a pain in the head calls up an image of hideous spiders on the *ceiling*, and sensations associated with the intestinal canal symbolize themselves through the image of a narrow alley, and so on. Such theories are too fanciful, and do not appear to correspond to most persons' experience. On the other hand, there is undoubtedly a tendency for certain feelings, more particularly bodily sensations, to present themselves uniformly under the guise of one kind of image. With myself, for example, a sensation of pressure in the heart or lungs very frequently translates itself into an imagination of hastening for a train. This fancy exactly corresponds to one of the most frequent and certainly most intense forms of mental agitation in my waking life. In a similar way one suspects all kinds of sensations during sleep are apt to clothe themselves in fancies which represent the most intense form of that particular mode of feeling. People who strongly dislike contention will often dream that they are involved in some noisy quarrel with their dearest friends. Thus a bodily sensation will tend to symbolise itself under some one form of fancy, varying with the individual's temperament and daily experience.

We are now, perhaps, in a position to explain, in part at least, how it is that the dreams which are excited by bodily sensations so seldom contain any inkling as to the real bodily source of those feelings. For one thing, they present themselves as greatly exaggerated in degree, and consequently in many cases have to be interpreted as feelings of another order. This accounts to some extent for the transformation of pleasurable and painful bodily sensations into the more intense mental emotions. But this is not all. Even in our waking life, we have but a faint consciousness of the bodily seat of the various organic sensations. Distinct localisation of sensation depends on sight and touch. Of these, sight probably does most to give distinctness and permanence to the idea of bodily locality. The internal parts of the body are wholly inaccessible to sight and touch, whilst even many parts of the bodily surface are rarely if ever seen or touched. Moreover, owing to the slight part played by ideas of touch in dreams as compared with those of sight, there is little scope for the representation of those parts, such as certain regions of the back, which are known to touch but not to sight. Hence the frequent remark that in dreams the mind is withdrawn from the body, which means first of all that most of its vague waking knowledge of its bodily organism now fails it, and, secondly, that its imaginative representations are mainly derived from impressions of the eye and of the ear; that is to say, of the senses whose activity is normally accompanied by the least degree of consciousness of the bodily organ concerned, but is concentrated in the perception of some object external to the organ.

In all these processes we see something like a suspension of those higher intellectual activities which serve to regulate our waking perceptions and actions. There is nothing like recognition, inference, or rational interpretation in most of our dreams. It seems almost as if during sleep we returned to the undeveloped mental condition of infancy, with the single difference that our emotions are more various and our images are furnished by a larger field of experience. It has been urged by more than one writer, with a good deal of plausibility, that dreams are representations of a primordial state of intelligence and mental development, as we see it now in children and some of the lower animals. The suspension of the higher intellectual functions and the absence, for the most part, of the higher emotions give support to this theory. Yet this is too wide a subject to be entered into here. My object is fulfilled if the foregoing examination of the force of dream-construction has been carried far enough; not, indeed, to account for all the complex aspects of dream-life, but to show that this life betrays underneath all its apparent lawless spontaneity clear traces of an order impressed on it by ascertainable formative influences.

Thoughts on Criticism, by a Critic.

PERHAPS the most offensive type of human being in the present day is the young gentleman of brilliant abilities and high moral character who has just taken a good degree. It is his faith that the University is the centre of the universe, and its honours the most conclusive testimonials to genius. His seniors appear to him to be old fogies; his juniors mere children; and women, whatever his theories as to their possible elevation, fitted at present for no better task than the skilful flattery of youthful genius. He is at the true social apex. He is half-afraid, it may be, of men of the world and women of society; but his fear masks itself under a priggish self-satisfaction. A few years in a wider circle will knock the nonsense out of him, unless he is destined to ripen into one of those scholastic pedants now fortunately rarer than of old. But meanwhile it happens that a large part of the critical staff of the nation is formed by fresh recruits from this class of society. The young writer, with the bloom of his achievements still fresh, is prepared to sit in judgment with equal confidence upon the last new novel or theory of the universe. The aim of much University teaching is to produce that kind of readiness which tells in a competitive examination, and is equally applicable to the composition of a smart review. In the schools, a lad of twenty-two is ready with a neat summary of any branch of human knowledge. When he issues into the world, he is prepared to deal with the ripest thinkers of the day, as he dealt with the most eminent philosophers of old. In these hours he can give a history of philosophy from Plato to Hegel. Why waste more time upon Mill or Hamilton?

That much contemporary criticisms represent the views of such writers, will, I think, be admitted by most readers of periodical literature. It is a favourite belief of many sufferers under the critical lash, that it represents scarcely anything else. When an author has spent years, or even months, in elaborating an argument or accumulating knowledge, it is rather annoying to see himself tried and sentenced within a week from his appearance in the world. His critic, it seems, can merely have glanced over his pages, taken down a label at random from some appropriate pigeon-hole, and affixed it with a magisterial air of supercilious contempt. *Là voilà le chameau!* as Mr. Lewes' French philosopher remarks, when composing the natural history of the animal on the strength of half-an-hour in the Jardin des Plantes. The poor history or philosophy, the darling of its author's heart, so long patiently meditated,

so delicately and carefully prepared, associated with so much labour, anxiety, and forethought, is put in its proper place as rapidly as Professor Owen could assign a ticket to a fossil tooth. It is not strange if the victim condemns his judge as an ignorant prig, and is tormented by an impotent longing for retaliation. But experience has probably taught him that to argue with a critic in his own columns is like drawing a badger in its den. You may be the strongest outside, but within you have to rush upon a sharp cagework of defensive teeth with your own hands tied. Silence, with as much dignity as may be, is his only course.

All criticism, one may say, is annoying. A wise man should never read criticisms of his own work. It is invariably a painful process; for all blame is obviously unfair, and praise as certainly comes in the wrong place. Moreover, it is a bad habit to be always looking in a glass, and especially in a mirror apt to distort and magnify. If a man is conscious that he has done his best, he should let his work take its chance with such indifference as he can command. Its success will be in the long run what it deserves, or, which comes to much the same thing, will be determined by a tribunal from which there is no appeal. All that criticism does is slightly to retard or hasten the decision, but scarcely to influence it. Every attack is an advertisement, and few authors now-days have any difficulty in finding the circle really congenial to them. That circle once reached, an author should be satisfied. It may gain him much pecuniary profit but little real influence or fame when he comes to be forced upon those who don't spontaneously care for him. Now, the true author should, of course, be as indifferent to money as to insincere praise, and he is pretty certain to get all that he can really claim, namely, a sufficient hearing. Therefore, authors should burn unread all reviews of themselves, and possess their souls in peace.

Nobody, of course, will take this advice; but at least one may hope that a sense of decency will prevent authors and their admirers from howling too noisily under the lash. Why should the heaven-born poet shriek and rant because his earthborn critic does not do him justice? A true poet is the apostle of a new creed. He reveals hitherto unnoticed aspects of truth or beauty; his originality measures at once his genius and his chance of being misunderstood. It is his special prerogative to give form and colour to the latent thoughts and emotions of his time, and those whom he interprets to themselves will be grateful. But the utterance necessarily shocks all who cling from pedantry or from conservatism to the good old conventions. Their resistance is in proportion to the vigour of his attack, and he should hail their reproaches as compliments in disguise. Bacon or Locke had no right to be angry because the representatives of old scholasticism resented their attacks; nor Wordsworth nor Keats, because the admirers of Pope objected to the new forms of poetry. Wordsworth, with his sublime self-complacency, took hostile criticism as an unconscious confession of stupidity, and declared contemporary unpopularity to be a mark of true genius. The

friends of Keats howled, and have been more or less howling ever since, because the old walls of convention did not fall down of themselves to welcome their assailants. Byron's contempt for the soul which let itself be snuffed out by an article is more to the purpose than Shelley's unmanly wailing over the supposed murder. The *Adonais* is an exquisite poem, but to read it with pleasure one must put the facts out of sight.

Our Adonais hath drunk poison, oh!
 What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
 Life's early cup with such a draught of woe!

Beautiful! but a rather overstrained statement of the fact that Keats had been cut up in the *Quarterly Review*. On the theory that poetry and manliness are incompatible, that a poet is and ought to be a fragile being, ready to

Die of a rose in aromatic pain,

the expressions may be justified. Otherwise Keats's death—if it had really been caused by the review—would certainly provoke nothing but pitying contempt. He that goes to war should count the cost; and one who will break the slumbers of mankind by new strains of poetic fervour must reckon upon the probability that many of the slumberers will resent the intrusion by a growl or an execration. Poets have a prescriptive right to be a thin-skinned race; but even they should not be guilty of the ineffable meanness of prostrating themselves before reviewers to receive sentence of life or death. What have these dwellers in the upper sphere to do with the hasty guesses of newspapers? What would a Shakspeare, or a Milton, or a Wordsworth, have said to such wailings? After all, what does it matter? Take it at the worst, and suppose yourself to be crushed for ever by a column of contemptuous language. Will the universe be much the worse for it? Can't we rub along tolerably without another volume or two of graceful rhymes? Is it anything but a preposterous vanity which generates the fancy that a rebuff to your ambition is an event in the world's history? If you are but a bubble, pray burst and hold your tongue. The great wheels of the world will grind on, and your shrieks be lost in the more serious chorus of genuine suffering. Whilst millions are starving in soul and body, we can't afford to waste many tears because a poet's toes have been trampled in the crush.

Though criticism may have far less power than our fears and our vanities assign to it, it has its importance; and at a time when all literature is becoming more critical, it is worth while to consider some of the principles which should guide it. We should, if possible, spare needless pangs even to a childish vanity, and we should anxiously promote the growth of a critical spirit such as raises instead of depressing the standard of literary excellence. The historian and the man of science can count upon fairly intelligent and scholarlike critics. Even if they be a little arrogant and prejudiced, they have one great ad-

vantage. There is a definite code of accepted principles. A mistake is clearly a mistake ; and if the critic and his victim disagree, they have a definite issue and a settled method for decision. The judge may give a wrong decision, but he is administering a recognised code. We can apply scales and balances, and measure the work done with something like arithmetical accuracy.

In æsthetic questions the case is different. There is no available or recognised standard of merit. The ultimate appeal seems to lie to individual taste. I like Wordsworth, you like Pope—which is right ? Are both right, or neither, or is it merely a matter of individual taste, as insoluble as a dispute between a man who prefers burgundy and one who prefers claret ? The question would be answered if there were ever a science of æsthetics. At present we have got no further towards that consummation than in some other so-called sciences ; we have invented a sounding name and a number of technical phrases, and are hopelessly at a loss for any accepted principles. We can, therefore, talk the most delicious jargon with all the airs of profound philosophy, but we cannot convince any one who differs from us. The result is unfortunate, and oddly illustrates a popular confusion of ideas. There is surely no harm in a man's announcing his individual taste, if he expressly admits that he is not prescribing to the tastes of others. If I say that I dislike Shakspeare, I announce a fact, creditable or otherwise, of which I am the sole judge. So long as I am sincere, I am no more to be blamed than if I announced myself to be blind or deaf, or expressed an aversion to champagne. But, in practice, nobody is allowed to announce his own taste without being suspected of making it into a universal rule. It is a curious experiment, for example, to say openly that you don't care for music. Many men of good moral character have shared the distaste, and it may mean no more than some trifling physical defect. A thick-ness in the drum of the ear is not disgraceful, but it makes you necessarily incapable of appreciating Beethoven. One who avows his incapacity is simply revealing the melancholy fact that he is shut out from one great source of innocent pleasure. But no arguments will convince an ordinary hearer that your confession does not carry with it a declaration of belief that delight in music is contemptible and possibly immoral. To disavow so illogical a conclusion is hopeless. Experience, we must presume, has made it into an axiom that a man always hates and despises, and regards as a fit object for universal contempt and hatred, whatever he does not understand.

This is the first great stumbling-block in æsthetic criticism. Both readers and writers confound the enunciation of their own taste with the enunciation of universal and correct principles of taste. There is an instructive story in *Don Quixote* which is much to the purpose. Sancho Panza had two uncles who had an unrivalled taste in wine. One of them asserted that a certain butt of wine had a twang of leather ; another detected, with equal confidence, a slight flavour of iron. The assistants

laughed; but the laugh was the other way when the butt was drunk out and an old key with a leather thong detected at the bottom. Which things are an allegory. The skilled critic detects a flavour of vulgarity, of foreign style, or of what not, in a new writer. The mob of readers protests or acquiesces. Possibly at some future time the truth is discovered. The critic's palate was vitiated by prejudice, or some biographical fact turns up which justifies his appreciation; or, though no overt fact can be adduced, the coincidence of opinion of other qualified judges or the verdict of posterity confirms or refutes the verdict. We must wait, however, till the butt is drunk out, till time or accident has revealed the truth, and the judge himself has undergone judgment. And meanwhile we have, in the last resort, nothing but an individual expression of opinion, to be valued according to our appreciation of the writer's skill.

We know further that the best of critics is the one who makes fewest mistakes. We laugh at the familiar instances of our ancestors' blindness; but we ourselves are surely not infallible. We plume ourselves on detecting the errors of so many able men; but the very boast should make us modest. Will not the twentieth century laugh at the nineteenth? Will not our grandchildren send some of our modern idols to the dustheaps, and drag out works of genius from the neglect in which we so undeservedly left them? No man's fame, it is said, is secure till he has lived through a century. His children are awed by his reputation; his grandchildren are prejudiced by a reaction; only a third generation pronounces with tolerable impartiality on one so far removed from the daily conflict of opinion. In a century or so, we can see what a man has really done. We can measure the force of his blows. We can see, without reference to our personal likes or dislikes, how far he has moulded the thoughts of his race and become a source of spiritual power. That is a question of facts, as much as any historical question, and criticism which takes it properly into account may claim to be in some sense scientific. To anticipate the verdict of posterity is the great task of the true critic, which is accomplished by about one man in a generation.

The nature of the difficulty is obvious. The critic has to be a prophet without inspiration. The one fact given him is that he is affected in a particular way by a given work of art; the fact to be inferred is, that the work of art indicates such and such qualities in its author, and will produce such and such an effect upon the world. No definite mode of procedure is possible. It is a question of tact and instinctive appreciation; it is not to be settled by logic, but by what Dr. Newman calls the "illative sense;" the solution of the problem is to be felt out, not reasoned out, and the feeling is necessarily modified by the "personal equation," by that particular modification of the critic's own faculties, which cause him to see things in a light more or less peculiar to himself. He is disgusted by a certain poem; perhaps he dislikes the author, or the author's religious or political school; or he is out of humour, or tried by over-

work, or unconsciously biassed by a desire to point some pet moral of his own, or simply to find some excuse for a brilliant article. If he has succeeded in eliminating these disturbing influences, the problem is still intricate. Grant that the author disgusts me, and, further, that I can put my finger on the precise cause of disgust, and discover it to be some tone of sentiment which, in my opinion, is immoral or morbid; how can I be sure, first, that I am right, and, next, that the disgust should be equally felt by my descendants? The greatest errors of judgment have been founded on perfectly correct appreciations. Burke was undeniably right in the opinion that Rousseau's sentiment was often morbid, immoral, and revolutionary. He was wrong in inferring that these blemishes deprived Rousseau's work of all permanent value, so that under the vanity and the disease there was not a deep vein of true and noble passion. Every great writer of the present day is regarded in a similar spirit by the section opposed to him in sentiment, and yet it may be held by the charitable that even the most deadly antagonism is consistent with real co-operation. When we read the great works of a past epoch with due absence of prejudice, we are always astonished by the degree in which those who struck most fiercely really shared the ideas of their opponents.

A critic, it has been inferred, should in all cases speak for himself alone. He is, or ought to be, an infallible judge of his own likes or dislikes; he cannot dictate to his neighbour. For this reason, it has been suggested, all anonymous criticism is bad. A man who calls himself "we" naturally takes airs which the singular "I" would avoid. Whatever the general principles upon this subject, I do not much believe in the remedy. Anonymous criticism may be less responsible, but it is more independent. Why should I not condemn a man's work without telling him that I personally hold him to be a fool? Why should literary differences be embittered by personal feeling? If every man knew his judge, would not the practical result be an increase of bitterness in some cases and adulation in others? The mask may at times conceal an assassin, but it discourages flattery and softens antipathy. I fancy that a man, unjust enough to let his personal feelings colour his criticisms, generally likes to be known to his victim. Spite loses half its flavour when it is forced to be anonymous. Whatever the cause, the open critic differs from his anonymous rival by nothing but a trifling addition of pretentiousness, dogmatism, and severity. A writer is perhaps more modest the first time he has to give his name; but by the twentieth he has rubbed off that amiable weakness. Publicity hardens and generates conceit more decorously than privacy encourages laxity. The most ferocious denunciation, and the most arrogant dogmatism, have, I think, been shown by men whose names were known to everybody, if not actually published.

The fact, however, remains, that after all a criticism is only an expression of individual feeling. The universal formula might be:—I, A. B., declare that you, C. D., are a weariness to me, or the reverse. The moral is, that a critic should speak of his author as one gentleman

of another, or as a gentleman of a lady; the case being, of course, excepted when the author is palpably not a lady or gentleman, but a male or female blackguard. This maxim may be infringed by brutality or by dogmatism. The slashing reviewer seems to forget that he and his victim are both human beings, and bound by the ordinary decencies of life. The really pathetic case is, not when the heaven-born poet is misunderstood, but when some humble scribbler is scarified by the thoughtless critic. It is not a crime to be stupid, and to be forced to write for bread. Literature is a poor but a fairly honest profession. A widow with a family on her hands, a harmless governess, a clerk disabled by disease, has a pen, ink, and paper, can spell, and write grammar. With that slender provision, he or she tries to eke out a scanty living by some poor little novel. It is, of course, silly and commonplace. It is a third-rate imitation of an inferior author. It will go to the waste-paper heap, in any case, before the year is out, and the only wonder is that it has found a publisher. If the brilliant young prig could see the wretched author in the flesh, and realise the pangs of fear and suspense that have gone to the little venture, he would feel sheer pity, and his hand be attracted to his pockets. But when he sees only the book, and his pen is nearer than his purse, he proceeds to make fun of the miserable sufferer, and sprinkles two columns with sparkling epigrams with the sense of doing a virtuous action. Since the days of the *Dunciad*, it has been clear that nothing is so cruel as a wit. Wits have invented the opposite maxim. Take it for a rule, says Pope, with some truth,

No creature smarts so little as a fool.

But even a fool has his natural feelings as clearly as Shylock. When Macaulay jumped upon poor "Satan" Montgomery, and hacked and hewed and slashed him till he had not a whole bone in his body, he tried to prove that the example was demanded in the interests of literature. Surely, Macaulay was deluding himself, and the interest really consulted was his own reputation for smartness. *Satan* (I speak of the poem so-called) would have been dead long ago if Macaulay had never written; and the art of puffery could surely not have been more vigorous.

Such weapons should be kept for immoral writings or for successful imposture. There they are fair enough; and there is not the least danger that, confined to that application, they will rust from disuse. Stupidity enthroned in high places justifies the keenest ridicule. Stupidity on its knees scarcely requires the lash. Some amiable persons seem, indeed, to hold that the lash can never be required. They believe in sympathetic criticism. They would praise the good and leave the bad to decay of itself. The doctrine, however taking, is not more moral, and perhaps is more deleterious than the opposite. No man, says the excellent maxim, has ever been written down except by himself. Hostile criticism gives pain, but does not inflict vital wounds. Many writers, on the other

hand, have been spoilt by indiscriminate praise. The temptation to become an imitator of oneself, is the most insidious of all to which an author is exposed. When a man has discovered his true power he should use it, but he should not use it to repeat his old feats in cold blood. The distinction is not always easy to urge, but it is of vital importance. The works of the greatest writers, of the Shakspeares and Goethes, show a process of continuous development. The later display the same faculties as the earlier, but ripened and differently applied. The works of second-rate authors are often like a series of echoes. Each is a feeble repetition of the original which won the reputation. The flattery, now too common, makes this malady commoner than of old. A good writer, like a king, can do no wrong. Wonderful ! admirable ! faultless ! is the cry ; give us more of the same, and make it as much the same as possible. Is it wonderful that the poor man's head is turned, and his hold upon the ablest judges weakens whilst his circulation increases

The mischief is intensified when a couple of sympathetic critics get together. They become the nucleus of a clique, and develop into a mutual admiration society. They form a literary sect, with its pet idols and its sacred canons of taste. They are the first persons to whom art has revealed its true secrets. Other cliques have flourished and laid down laws, and passed away ; theirs will be eternal. The outside world may sneer, the members of the clique will only draw closer the curtain which excludes the profane vulgar from their meetings. As a rule, such a body contains one or two men of genuine ability, and has some ground for its self-praise, though not so unassailable a ground as it fancies. But genius condemned to live in such a vapour-bath of perpetually steaming incense, becomes soft of fibre and loses its productive power. It owes more than it would admit to the great world outside, which ridicules its pretensions and is perhaps blind even to its genuine merits. Addison was not the better for giving laws to a little senate ; but Addison fortunately mixed in wider circles, and was not always exposed to the adulation of Tickell and "namby-pamby" Phillips. Every man should try to form a circle of friends, lest he should be bewildered and isolated in the confused rush of a multitudinous society ; but the circle should, so to speak, be constantly aerated by outside elements, or it will generate a mental valetudinarianism. The critic, who can speak the truth and speak out, is therefore of infinite service in keeping the atmosphere healthy.

A critic, then, should speak without fear or favour, so long as he can speak with the courtesy of a gentleman. He should give his opinion for what it is worth, neither more nor less. As the opinion of an individual, it should not be dogmatic ; but as the opinion of a presumably cultivated individual, it should give at least a strong presumption as to that definitive verdict which can only be passed by posterity. The first difficulty which he will meet is to know what his opinion really is. No one who has not frankly questioned himself can appreciate the difficulty of performing this apparently simple feat. Every man who has read

much has obscured his mind with whole masses of unconscious prejudice. An accomplished critic will declare a book to be fascinating of which he cannot read a page without a yawn, or a sheet without slumber. He will denounce as trashy and foolish a book which rivets his attention for hours. This is the one great advantage of the mob above the connoisseur. The vulgar have bad taste, but it is a sincere taste. They can't be persuaded to read except by real liking; and in some rare cases, where good qualities are accidentally offensive to the prevailing school of criticism, the cultivated reader will reject what is really excellent. The first point, therefore, is to have the rare courage of admitting your own feelings.

In poets as true genius is but rare,
True taste as seldom is the critic's share,

as Pope says; and chiefly for this reason. In all our array of critics, there are scarcely half-a-dozen whose opinions are really valuable, and simply because there are scarcely so many whose opinions are their own. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, a so-called critique is a second-hand repetition of what the critic takes for the orthodox view. Whenever we see the expression of genuine feeling, we recognise a valuable contribution to our knowledge. That, for example, is the secret of the singular excellence of Lamb's too scanty fragments of criticism. He only spoke of what he really loved, and therefore almost every sentence he wrote is worth a volume of conventional discussion. He blundered at times; but his worst blunders are worth more than other men's secondhand judgments. Spontaneity is as valuable in the parasitic variety of literature as in the body of literature itself, and even more rare. Could we once distinguish between our own tastes and the taste which we adopt at second-hand, we should have at least materials for sound judgment.

This vivacity and originality of feeling is the first qualification of a critic. Without it no man's judgment is worth having. Almost any judgment really springing from it has a certain value. But the bare fact that an aversion or a liking exists requires interpretation. To find the law by which the antipathy is regulated is to discover the qualities of the antagonistic elements. A good critic can hardly express his feelings without implicitly laying down a principle. When (to take a case at random) Lamb says of certain scenes in Middleton, that the "insipid levelling morality to which the modern stage is tied down, would not admit of such admirable passions," as fill the passages in question, he preaches a doctrine, sound or unsound, of great importance. He says, that is, that certain rules of modern decorum are aesthetically injurious and ethically erroneous. The particular rules infringed are to be discovered from the special instance, and the fact that a man with Lamb's idiosyncrasies denounced them must be taken into account when we would apply them as canons of judgment. The judgments of good critics upon a number of such problems thus form a body of doctrine

analogous to what is known to jurists as case-law. The rule for our guidance is not explicitly stated, but it is to be inferred from a number of particular instances, by carefully estimating their resemblance to the fresh instance and assigning due weight to the authority of the various judges.

As competent literary judges are rare, and their decisions conflicting, the task of extricating the general rule is difficult or rather impossible. No general rules perhaps can be laid down with absolute confidence. But the analogy may suggest the mode in which we may hope gradually to approximate to general rules, and to find grounds for reasonable certainty in special cases. Though no single critic is infallible, we may assume that the *vox populi* is infallible if strictly confined to its proper sphere. When many generations have been influenced by an individual, we have demonstrative evidence that he must have been a man of extraordinary power. It is an indisputable fact that Homer and Æschylus delighted all intelligent readers for over 2,000 years. To explain that fact by any other theory than the theory that the authors possessed extraordinary genius is impossible. A man, therefore, who flies in the face of the verdict of generations is self-condemned. The probability that his blindness indicates a defect in his eyesight is incomparably greater than the probability that all other eyes have been somehow under an illusion. The argument applies to less colossal reputations. Not only a critic of the last century who could see nothing in Dante, but a critic in the present who thinks Pope a mere fool, or Voltaire a mere buffoon, puts himself out of court. Let him by all means confess his want of perception if it be necessary; but do not let him go on to criticise men in regard to whom he suffers from a kind of colour-blindness. My palate refuses to distinguish between claret and burgundy, but I never set myself up for a judge of wine.

It may be added that the power of swaying the imaginations of many generations indicates more than mere force. It is a safe indication of some true merit. No religion thrives which does not embody—along with whatever errors—the deepest and most permanent emotions of mankind. No art retains its interest for posterity which does not give permanent expression to something more than the temporary tastes, and, moreover, to something more than the vicious and morbid propensities of mankind. To justify this maxim would lead us too far; but I venture to assume that it could be justified by a sufficient induction. All great writers have their weaknesses; but their true power rests upon their utterance of the ennobling and health-giving emotions.

This doctrine is accepted even too unreservedly by most critics of the past. A slavish care for established reputation is more common than a rash defiance. The way, for example, in which Shakspeare's faults have been idolised along with his surpassing merits is simply a disgrace to literature. Were I writing for students of old authors, I would exhort them rather to attend to the limitations of the doctrine than to the doc-

trine itself. We are too apt to confound the qualities by which a man has succeeded with those in spite of which he has succeeded. The application of the doctrine to the living is, however, a more pressing problem. Our aim, I have said, is to anticipate the verdict of posterity, and we cannot anticipate infallibly. We cannot even lay down absolute rules of a scientific character. All that we can do is to proceed in a scientific spirit, which may therefore be favourable to the discovery of such rules in future. If doomed to continual blunders, our blunders may form landmarks for the future, and not be simple exhibitions of profitless folly and prejudice.

The critic who gives a matured expression of his tastes lays down a principle. He should proceed to apply an obvious test. Will his principle fit in with the accepted verdict as to the great men of the past? A simple attention to this rule would dissipate a vast amount of foolish criticism. There has been, for example, a great outcry against a vice known as sensationalism. In one sense, the outcry justifies itself. People have been shocked by overdoses of horror and crime; and the art which has shocked them must be in some sense bad. But when critics proceed to lay down canons which would suppress all literature more exciting than Miss Austen's novels, they are surely forgetting one or two obvious facts. Canons are calmly propounded which would condemn all Greek tragedy, which would condemn Dante, and Milton, and Shakespeare, and the whole school of early English dramatists, and some of Scott's finest novels, to say nothing of Byron, or of Balzac, or Victor Hugo. The simple fact that a poem or a novel deals with crime and suffering cannot be enough to condemn it, or we should be doomed to a diet of bread and butter for all future time. The true question is as to the right mode of dealing with such subjects, and the critic who would condemn all dealing with them is really betraying his cause. He is trying to force an impracticable code upon mankind, and is allowing the true culprits to associate their cause with better men. Moreover, he is talking nonsense.

To keep steadily in mind the verdict of the past, not to break a painted window in anxiety to smash the insect which is crawling over it, is thus the great safeguard of a critic. A more difficult problem is the degree of respect due to modern opinion. The widest popularity may certainly be gained by absolute demerits. We need not give examples of modern charlatans, whose fame has not yet gone to its own place. There are plenty of older examples. The false wit of Cowley and the strained epigrams of Young, the pompous sentimentalism of Hervey, the tinsel of Tom Moore, all won a share of popularity in their own day, which rivalled or eclipsed the fame of Milton and Pope, and Addison and Wordsworth. In two of these cases the fame was partly due to religious associations which superseded a purely literary judgment. On the other hand, there is a measure of fame which seems sufficiently to anticipate the verdict of posterity. There is perhaps

more than one living writer of whom it may be confidently asserted that his influence over the most thoughtful of his contemporaries has been won by such palpable services to truth and lofty sentiment, and has been so independent of the aid of adventitious circumstances, that his fame is as secure, though not as accurately measured, as it will be a century hence. To treat such men with insolence is as monstrous as to insult their predecessors. The burden of proof at least is upon the assailant, and he is bound to explain not merely the cause of his antipathy, but to explain the phenomenon which, on his showing, ought not to exist. A summary *tant pis pour les faits* will not bring him off, tempting as the method may be. When a spiritual movement has acquired a certain impetus and volume, its leader must be a great man. To admit that a mere charlatan can move the world, is to hold with the housemaid that a plate breaks of itself, or, with the Tories in Queen Anne's time, that Marlborough won his battles by sheer cowardice.

How to distinguish between the true and the sham influence is indeed a question not strictly soluble. It is enough to suggest that any man of true force has a sure instinct for recognising force elsewhere. The blindness of patriotic or party rage may sometimes encourage a Frenchman to laugh at Moltke's strategy, or an English politician of one party to call the Pitt or Fox of his opponents an idiot. No man, swayed by such passions, can criticise to any purpose; and the best safeguard against the resulting errors is a constant application of the doctrine that every spiritual impulse requires an adequate moral explanation as well as a physical. Some people are fond of ascribing the success of their antagonists to chance or to diabolic influence. They would be wise if they would remember that either phrase, when analysed, is equivalent to a simple confession of ignorance. It means that the source of the evil is in some sphere entirely outside our means of investigation. It is to abandon the problem, whilst masking our ignorance under an abusive epithet. Opponents may be justified if they take language of this kind as a panegyric in disguise.

There is, it is true, a weak side in the appeals often made to critical candour. Politicians sometimes denounce the bigotry of Liberals. The men who pride themselves upon their tolerance are often, it is said, the most dogmatic. But such denunciations, if often just, are apt to confound two very different things. Liberality imposes the duty of giving fair play to our opponents in action as in logic, but it does not command us to have no opinions at all. It is most desirable that every principle should be fully and fairly discussed, but it is certainly not desirable that no principles should ever be definitively established. The pure indifferentist naturally hates faith of all kinds, and tries to impute intolerance to any believer who carries faith into practice. There is, in short, a road to toleration which leads through pure scepticism; if every doctrine is equally true and equally false, there is no reason for ever being in a passion. That is not a desirable solution of the problem. It

is very difficult to hold my own opinions and to respect all sincere dissentients—to believe that my doctrines are true and important, and yet to refuse to advance them by unworthy methods. But the only true Liberal is the man who can accomplish that feat, and the tolerance made out of pure incredulity is a mere mockery of the genuine virtue.

The fact that candid people dispute conclusions which seem to me evident is not always a reason for admitting even a scruple of doubt. There are cases in which it may even confirm them. A truth is fully established when it not only explains certain phenomena, but explains the source of erroneous conceptions of the phenomena. The true theory of astronomy shows why false theories were inevitably plausible at certain periods. No doctrine can be quite satisfactory till it helps us to see why other people do not see it. When that is clearly intelligible, the very errors confirm the true theory. In matters of taste there is a similar canon. There are undoubtedly bad tastes as well as good. There are tastes, that is, which imply stupidity, or craving for coarse excitement, or incapacity for distinguishing between rant and true rhetoric, between empty pomp of language and genuine richness and force of imagination. There are tastes which imply a thoroughly corrupt nature, and others which imply vulgarity and coarseness. To admit that all tastes are equally good is to fall into an aesthetic scepticism as erroneous as the philosophical scepticism which should make morality or political principles matters of arbitrary convention. A critic who is tolerant in the sense of admitting this indifference abnegates his true function; for the one great service which a critic can render is to keep vice, vulgarity, or stupidity at bay. He cannot supply genius; but he can preserve the prestige of genius by revealing to duller minds the difference between good work and its imitation.

The sense in which a critic should be liberal is marked out by this consideration. The existence of any artistic school, however much he dislikes its tendency, is a phenomenon to be explained and not to be denounced until it is explained. If it has a wide popularity, or includes many able men, there is a strong presumption that it corresponds in some way to a real want of the time. It embodies a widespread, and presumably, therefore, not a purely objectionable emotional impulse. It proves, at the lowest, that rival forms of expression do not satisfy the wants of contemporaries, and are so far defective. Even if it be, in the critic's eye, a purely reactionary movement, the existence of a reaction proves that something is wanting in that against which it reacts. Some element of feeling is inadequately represented, and therefore the objectionable movement indicates a want, if it does not suggest the true remedy. It may be that, in some cases, the critic will be forced to say that, after taking such considerations into account, he can yet see nothing more in his antagonist than the embodiment of a purely morbid tendency. They represent a disease in the social order which requires caustic and the knife. When a man has deliberately formed such an opinion, he should express it

frankly, though as temperately as may be ; but it will probably be admitted that such cases are very rare, and that a man who has the power of seeing through his neighbours' eyes will generally discover that they catch at least a distorted aspect of some truths not so clearly revealed to their opponents.

By keeping such rules in mind, the critic will certainly not become infallible. He will not discover any simple mechanical test for the accurate measurement of literary genius. Nor will he or a whole generation of critics succeed in making an exact science out of an art which must always depend upon natural delicacy of perception. But he will be working in the right direction, and undergoing a wholesome discipline. If he does not discover any rigidly correct formulæ, he will be helping towards the establishment of sound methods ; and though he will not store his mind with authoritative dogmas, he will encourage the right temper for approaching a most delicate task. In many cases, indeed, the task is easy enough. It would be affectation to deny that there are a good many books which may be summarily classified as rubbish, without much risk of real injustice, though sentence need not be passed in harsh language. But to judge of any serious work requires, besides the natural faculty, possessed by very few, an amount of habitual labour to look from strange points of view which is almost equally rare. There are many poems, for example, which can hardly be criticised to effect till the critic knows them by heart, and a man cannot be expected to do that who has to pronounce judgment within a week. In that case, all that can be recommended is a certain modesty in expression and diffidence in forming opinions which is not universal amongst our authoritative critics.

Across the Pent-fields.

CHAPTER VII.

COFFEE.

ENGLISH Parisians are a curious race of willing exiles from their own country. I remember how I and my companions as girls used to feel an odd isolation at times and shame for our expatriation. We used to hang up our youthful harps by the waters of Babylon and lament our captivity, and think with longing of the green pastures and still waters of our native land. Older people feel things differently. Captain Thompson for one was never so well pleased as when anybody mistook him and his paddings and his blue boots for a Frenchman. He was respected in his own country; he was the master of a pretty home there and a comfortable estate; but his dream was to live abroad, and to be ordered about by the widow. He would have changed his name, and his nationality, if he could, as he did his clothes, and all his habits, soon after making Madame Valmy's acquaintance. After he knew her time and space were not, except indeed so far as they concerned her and her wishes. For two years he had lived in her presence; he had taught himself French, which he spoke with wonderful fluency and an inaccuracy which was almost heroic. Madame Valmy used to stop her pretty little ears at times; the Captain would blush, try to correct himself good-humouredly, and go on again, after gallantly kissing her fair hand by way of making peace. Of his devotion to her there was little doubt; her feelings for him used often to puzzle me. She seemed to avoid his company, to be bored by him; to accept his devotion, his care, his romance, with weariness and impatience. I have seen a doubtful look in his honest round face at times, and then at a word from her, some friendly little sign, he would brighten up again.

Little girls who are not yet of an age to be engrossed in conversation or in their own affairs are more observant than people imagine, and although Pauline praised Madame Valmy from morning to night, I never heartily responded. She was white, she was pink, she was exquisitely dressed, she was kind, her eyes were blue under her thick fair eyebrows; but it seemed to me that her kindness, her grace, her soft colours, were not the spontaneous outcomings of a gentle heart, but the deliberate exertion of her wish to please, to seem charming to certain persons for purposes of her own. It seemed to me that she was stupid, and with all her cleverness devoid of imagination. I remember once seeing her push a toddling child out of

her way into the gutter; the little thing fell and began to cry; Madame Valmy walked quietly on, scarcely glancing to see whether the baby was hurt. It was Monsieur Fontaine, who happened to be on his doorstep, who came down, picked the child up, and gave it a sugar-plum, and wiped its face with his bandanna handkerchief.

Madame Valmy had been spoiled all her life, by fortune, by misfortune, by trouble of every kind. She had married to escape a miserable home, but she married a rough and jealous and brutal man, whom she had never loved, and his cruelty roused all that was worst in her nature. Madame Valmy seemed to be utterly without the gift of conscience. Some people are said not to have souls—at least that is the only way in which I can account for events which came to my knowledge afterwards, and which never seemed to me quite satisfactorily explained away. Sometimes I believe for a minute some vague vision of better things than her own warmth and ease and greed and need for admiration would come before her, but these visions were only passing ones; at the first nip of cold, the first effort of self-restraint, this weak, stubborn, reckless creature forgot everything but her own grasping wishes—to be first, to be rich, envied, admired, to dazzle and eclipse all other women, to fascinate every man within her reach, to go to heaven charming M. le Curé and M. le Vicaire by the way—I can hardly tell what she hoped and what she did not hope. She was not grateful, for she took everything as her due, while she had the bitter resentments of a person who over-estimates her own consequence; but with all this her manner was so charming, so gentle and sprightly, her laughter was so sympathetic, her allusions to her past sufferings so natural and so simple, that most people were utterly convinced by her. Madame Fournier and Pauline both thought there was no one like their pretty, poor, ill-used Madame Valmy. Fournier mistrusted her, but Fontaine would have gone to the farthest end of his Commune for her, and as for our compatriot Captain Thompson, he was head and ears in love with her, and considered himself engaged to the sweetest angel in the world.

He had first known her at Visy in her husband's lifetime; it was from Valmy that he had bought his land and the little house in the village which he inhabited. Captain Thompson never spoke of those days. I have seen him turn quite pale when Fontaine made any allusion to the time when they first met. Fontaine was less sensitive, and used to give us dark hints of Madame Valmy's history. I remember one evening, as we were all strolling across the fields in the sunset, that Fontaine was discoursing about the Valmy *ménage* and stove in his dining-room.

"It is six years since it was put up," said he. "I remember that the only civility the late M. Valmy ever showed me was at that time. He came to see it fixed and gave me several very useful hints."

"M. Valmy! You knew him then. What sort of man was he?" said Madame Fournier.

"That would not be very easy to tell you," said Fontaine. "He was a man of military carriage, bronze complexion, a black, penetrating eye, a

taciturn disposition. You may have heard how he locked himself up, and his wife too for the matter of that. They say he once kept her for a whole month in one of those little cells out of the dining-room."

"Who says so?" cried a voice at our shoulder. What a horror! It was Pauline who had joined us.

"Ah, Mademoiselle!" said Fontaine; "excuse my starting—in reply to your question," and he lowered his voice, "Madame Picard mentioned the circumstance to me. She lived next door, and she heard it from a servant who was soon afterwards dismissed."

"I don't believe it," said Pauline. "M. Fontaine, you should not repeat such things." All the same I saw Pauline watching Madame Valmy that evening with strange looks of pity. Well, her troubles were over. Captain Thompson seemed to be of quite a different temperament from his predecessor, and his one regret was that there were not more families in the neighbourhood with whom there was any possibility of intimacy. The retired pastrycook in the house near the church was scarcely an associate for educated people; the doctor was a stupid little being, born in the village, and with but two ideas in his head. One was that Madame Picard should look kindly on his suit, and join her fortune and her cows to his practice; the other idea was that an "infusion de thé" was a specific for every malady.

On this particular evening, as we walked through the village, Madame Valmy began to ask us all in, to drink coffee in her garden.

"It is absurd," said she, "of me to invite you down from your pleasant terrace to my little parterre, but, as you are here, if you will come in, the Captain shall make the coffee. Nobody understands the art so well as he does. Even Julianne admits his superiority."

As she spoke she led the way and we all followed one by one. We came in across the court-yard, passed through the house and out into the garden again, where a table was ready laid, and some chairs were set out. Julianne, looking as black as usual, and not prepared to admit anybody's superiority, came and went with coffee-cups and plates of biscuit and cakes, clanking her wooden shoes. The sky was ablaze, and so were the Michaelmas daisies in Madame Valmy's flower-beds. They seemed burning with most sweet and dazzling colour. A glow of autumn spread over the walls and the vines, and out beyond the grated door that looked upon the road and the stubble-fields.

As I sat there I looked back into the comfortable house through the drawing-room windows. M. Fontaine's dark inuendoes seemed utterly out of place amid so much elegant comfort. How impossible crime and sorrow seem when the skies are peacefully burning, when the evil and the good are alike resting and enjoying the moment of tranquil ease! The Captain may have been enjoying himself, but he was not resting. He came and went, puffing and hospitable, with a huge coffee-pot, from which he filled our cups.

"Prengar, mon fille," he said to the maid-servant, over whom he

nearly tumbled once, coffee-pot and all, in his eagerness to serve us. Pauline put out her hand—one of the small tables went over; Madame Valmy gave a little scream of annoyance, the hot milk was spilt over her pale azure dress.

"Sidonie! my dear Sidonie, are you hurt?" cried he.

She laughed, but it was an angry laugh. "I am not in the least hurt, it is nothing," she said. "You have only spoilt my dress, you or whoever it was," and the gleam of her blue eyes seemed to say, Pauline, you have done it on purpose. "Here, Juliette! bring a handkerchief," she said; "there is one in my work-basket."

"I know, I saw it there," cried Maurice, eagerly jumping and running into the house.

I thought Pauline looked a little surprised that Maurice should be so much at home at the Pavilion as to know the contents of Madame Valmy's work-basket. She said nothing. Madame Fournier stared at the young man when he came back, and if Fontaine had not started some discussion about the length of time that coffee should be allowed to boil, I think we should none of us have spoken. Presently Fournier put his untasted cup down on the table, and looked up at the evening star which was twinkling over the garden wall.

"It is getting cold," he said. "My rheumatism will not let me sit still here any longer. Pauline, will you come for another walk?" said he, "so long as it is not in the direction of Etournelles; they have got their dance for the St. Come."

"Papa!" cried Pauline, "that is exactly where I want to go."

"Etournelles, is that where they are dancing?" said Maurice; "why should we not go? The Captain shall dance, and so will I, and here is our agile friend Fontaine," he added, laughing.

"I would go four miles to get out of their way," said Monsieur Fournier, impatiently.

It is all very well for people who have danced for years and years to all manner of tunes and jigs until they are tired, to walk away quietly. Pauline and I were young enough to feel our hearts beat more quickly when we heard the scraping of fiddlestrings; our limbs seemed to keep some secret time to the call of these homely instruments (how many measures are there not to which one would fain keep time while life endures!). Some melancholy strain had been sounding in Pauline's ears as she sat among Madame Valmy's gay flower-beds. The thought of the peasants' dance at Etournelles came to her, I could plainly see, as a distraction, a means of escape from oppressing thoughts.

"Dear papa," said she, "let us go; take mamma home. Maurice is here, he and Monsieur Fontaine will see us back."

"And I may be allowed surely to chaperone the young ladies. They would enjoy the dance of all things," said Madame Valmy, recovering her temper.

But Madame Fournier objected, as any properly-educated French

mother would be sure to do. Pauline must not be seen in public without her. What was Madame Valmy thinking of? To everybody's amazement Madame Fournier actually proposed to walk another mile to the dancing place. "M. Fournier, *thou* wilt send back the carriage to fetch us," said she, decisively. "Tell Jean to wait for us at the corner of the road by the Captain's new shed."

"Ah, yes, the machine is not working at this hour," said Fontaine, "or else it is hardly the place where I would recommend a carriage to wait."

It was settled. Fournier marched off to his evening paper; we started in couples and triples across the fields. I was surprised to notice Madame Valmy's childish excitement. She was nodding and wriggling in a sort of exaggeration of her usual ways. Pauline plodded alongside. Monsieur Fontaine had offered his arm to Madame Fournier, who had tied her handkerchief under her chin.

"Allow me to compliment you upon this extremely becoming toilette," I heard the Maire saying to her. "Sprigs upon a white ground are always in good taste."

Captain Thompson was still ruminating upon the accident. "Spilt milk. There's a proverb about spilt milk. It was a mercy her arm wasn't burnt, she would not have been able to come this evening. I don't know if you young ladies mean to dance. I think I would take a turn myself if I could find any one to take pity on me. You may well look surprised, Miss Mary. But I don't know how it is," said the little man, "everything seems so happy, and though I'm a middle-aged man, yet I feel as if I were a boy again. I have been very fortunate, I have had better luck than I deserve all my life, and now this sweet angel has taken pity on me and consents to take me under her wing. No wonder I feel young."

CHAPTER VIII.

A COUNTRY DANCE.

A PEASANTS' dance is always a pretty, half-merry, half melancholy festivity to persons looking on. The open air, the rustle of trees, the mingled daylight and darkness, the freshness, the roughness, the odd jingling of the country music, the rustic rhythm of the dancers; the country people coming across fields and skirting the high-roads; some feeling of the long years of hard work before them, of their daily toil intermitted; the echoes sounding across the darkening landscape—all these things touch one with some strange feeling of sympathy and compassion for the merry-makers. We were bound to a certain open green at Etournelles, where the villagers used to meet and dance on Sundays after church, while the elders looked on, smoked their pipes, and made their comments to the merry jigging and jingling of their children's pleasures.

The refreshments were simple enough, and consisted of a little beer, a few cakes, or pears, baked in the country ovens, and set upon a wooden board under a tree. The music was made by a boy blowing on a pipe, an old man scraping a fiddle, sometimes on grand occasions such as this a second fiddle was forthcoming, with an occasional chorus of voices from the people dancing. When the grand ladies and gentlemen from the houses all round about came to look on, the voices would be shy and hushed for a time. But soon the restraint would wear off; the dancers, carried away by the motion and the exhilaration of all this bouncing and swinging, would burst out anew; sometimes the fine people themselves would be seized with some sudden fancy to foot it with the rest. The grand gentlemen would ask the village maidens to dance, or lead forward one of their own blushing ladies, half shy, half bold.

Pauline was shy to-night, and when Maurice invited her, as he was in duty bound to do, she hung back a little ashamed, and yet, as I could see, she was only wanting a few words from him to give her courage. Her eyes looked so kind, her smile was so humble and yet so sweet for an instant. She blushed. "Won't you come?" said he gaily.

"Don't you see that the child is timid," said Madame Valmy, hastily. "I will begin! I am an old woman, I have faced more terrible things than a village dance. Will you hold my fan, M. Fontaine, and my shawl?"

Maurice could only offer his arm with ready alacrity.

Fontaine bowed and took the fan. Pauline's happy eyes seem to grow dim. The country people looked on, they had whispered a little to each other, hung back for a few minutes, and then again they seemed to be caught up by the wave, and to forget our presence. The tree rustled over our heads, and some birds awakened by the music chirped a note or two. The fields lay darkling round us, a great round pale moon slowly ascended from beyond the distant willow-trees. Its faint rays lit up the dark fields beyond, and the canal gleamed; so did the tiled roof of the new machine-house as it glittered in the light of this cold river of light.

Madame Fournier found a seat on a bench under a tree, Pauline and I stood beside her; our gentlemen came and went. There was a paper lantern hanging from a branch just over Madame Fournier's head, so that she seemed a sort of beacon to return to at intervals. Captain Thompson, seeing that Sidonie was dancing, invited me. We did not join the general circle, but chose a modest corner in the shade, where he and I danced a little polka to the music on our own account.

When he brought me back to Madame Fournier, Madame Valmy with a lively sign of the head was just going off a second time with M. le Comte.

"Ah! Capitaine," said Fontaine, who was standing by, we are admiring Madame Valmy's graceful talent. Yes, from out yonder you will see them better." "Admirable man!" said the Maire, looking after him. "There he goes! Times are changed since I first knew Madame Valmy.

Look at her, what grace, what gaiety. Ah! here is our good doctor. How do you do, Jobard? What are you doing here?"

"I have been to see Madelon at the mill," said Jobard, with a professional air. She sleeps, eats, the symptoms are good; I feared cholera, but there is no danger whatever. I am glad to see Madame Valmy enjoying herself so much. She too has been indisposed. She sent for me only yesterday; my medicine has done her good. How she goes round! Look at her! round and round!"

"Madame Valmy indisposed!" said Fontaine; "she never complained to me!"

"Oh!" said Jobard (he was a little, high-shouldered, shuffling man), "it has been a mere nothing—malaise! migraine! want of sleep, want of sleep! She could not close her eyes for the rats in that garret. I know them. I lived in the house that winter after poor M. Valmy died. There was noise enough to wake a regiment, wind in the chimney, rats and mice racing in the wainscot, and that tree outside creaking and swaying. Along with Madame Valmy's medicine, I sent some physic for messieurs the rats, which I found very efficacious when I was there. Those old houses, they are all alike. I infinitely prefer my present domicile." And Jobard, seeing a patient, walked on with a bow to Madame Fournier.

"Excellent man!" said Fontaine aloud, as Jobard walked off through the crowd, then he continued, lowering his voice: "He may well complain of the noises in that house; there are those who assure me that rats can hardly account for the extraordinary noises which are heard in the Pavilion at times. Those who believe in the supernatural declare that—but we will not talk of it. La Mère Coqueau, you know her—her daughter married Leroux, the blacksmith—once ventured to ask Mademoiselle Julienne her impression. She says she shall never forget the look in the woman's face."

"Madame Coqueau is an old gossip," said Pauline impatiently. "Why are you always quoting her, M. Fontaine?"

"She has played her rôle," said Fontaine, slightly offended. "I do not wish to bring her again upon the scene." Pauline, however, was not listening to the Maire, but to the music, and her eyes were following Maurice and Madame Valmy twirling in time to it. The two fiddles were answering each other with some fresh sudden spirit, and the whole company seemed stamping in time to the measure. A little wind came blowing from across the fields.

Madame Fournier, who liked anything in the shape of a medical disquisition, now began asking with some interest how M. Valmy died. "It was an unhealthy season," said Fontaine with his eloquent finger. "He had caught some chill out in his peat-fields, and he sent for Dr. Jobard. He seemed recovering, they talked of moving to Paris next day, when in the evening he was suddenly attacked with stomach cramp. Jobard was again sent for—I fetched him myself. He did everything

that could be done, applied cataplasms of bran, prescribed infusions of tea, and of violets. I called to inquire the first thing in the morning. Madame Valmy was most unremitting in her attentions; she allowed no one else to come near him, gave him every medicine, watched him night and day; nothing was neglected; it was all in vain; he died, poor man, and so much the better for everybody. You would not recognise Madame Valmy now if you had seen her then. Have you ever remarked a blue scar upon her throat?" said Fontaine, in a whisper, for Maurice and his partner were dancing past us at that moment. "Shall I tell you—"

"I have no curiosity for such details," interrupted Pauline coldly. "She has evidently forgotten her troubles, whatever they may have been."

"But this cholera is alarming," said Madame Fournier, with placid persistence.

"A man and an old woman died at Etournelles last year," said Fontaine, "and you know what terrible mortality we have had in Paris."

"So it *was* cholera," said Pauline.

"Dr. Jobard had no doubt whatever on the subject," replied the Maire.

"I never pay the slightest attention to anything that Dr. Jobard says," cried Pauline.

"Pardon me, Mademoiselle" (in a reproving tone). "Our excellent doctor has had great experience both with cattle and human subjects. He described the theory of cholera to me only the other day; it is proved to be some subtle poison which penetrates the system. Valmy, predisposed to absorb the miasma, fell a victim to its fatal influence. . . . Mademoiselle," said the Maire, interrupting himself suddenly, "they are playing a country dance; will you not honour me?" The fiddlers had changed their key.

Madame Valmy came gaily up, sliding her feet, leaning back on her partner's arm. She looked into Pauline's face with her sparkling blue eyes. "Dear Pauline," she said, "you must spare M. Maurice to me for this one more dance; I am positively a child where dancing is concerned. I could go on for hours."

It certainly occurred to me that Pauline and I were a great deal younger than she was, and not less inclined to dance. Pauline, however, refused Fontaine's invitation, although I heard Madame Fournier nervously urging her to take a turn. The girl was very pale, very determined. She wished to remain by her mother, she said.

It was at her suggestion that Fontaine offered me his arm, and we set off together, but Pauline's looks haunted me, and I thought that my partner also was pre-occupied.

Sometimes as we twirled in time, and advanced and retreated, I caught sight of Captain Thompson's little round face, anxiously watching his beautiful Sidonie in her flights.

"She dances too much," said Fontaine, who was also on the lookout. "When people have had such a life as hers, they are apt to forget everything when pleasure comes in their way. But I can see that

Thompson, who is the best fellow in the world, is vexed. Valmy never allowed her to dance. Perhaps he was in the right."

Fontaine seemed haunted by some spirit of reminiscence that evening. At every pause in the dance he kept returning to the story he had been telling us. "Who would believe in the past, who saw her now?" he said. "I know for certain she was once met flying from her home, but Valmy came after her, and she went back to him. They say he kept her locked up for three months on that occasion. It was then he had the gate leading from the courtyard to the garden fastened up."

There was something revolting to me in the thought of a woman, who had suffered so much, now apparently forgetting it all to the sound of a fiddle; forgetting her own past, and another person's present—so it seemed to me. She appeared to have no scruples; she absorbed Maurice that evening, without a thought for Pauline, or for Captain Thompson, who went away, I think, for I saw him no more. Maurice asked Pauline to dance once again, but it was evident that it was only from a sense of duty that he did so; and if Pauline consented, it was only to give a countenance to Maurice himself, and to prevent people from saying that he was entirely neglecting his betrothed. It was not a happy evening. Madame Fournier alone should have been satisfied. She made a heroic effort to give her daughter pleasure; her conscience was its own reward.

"Are we never going home, mamma?" said Pauline, wearily.

The music had ceased, the peasants were talking together and buzzing like a swarm of bees. As we were making our way across the green, towards the corner of the road where Madame Fournier had desired her carriage to meet her, we came upon two gentlemen walking arm-in-arm in the shadow. One was Maurice, the other was Fontaine, who seemed to have drawn his companion away from the crowd. It was impossible not to gather portions of the Maire's emphatic sentences as we came along: "You cannot prevent chattering tongues. Your duty to your interesting fiancée—excuse the frankness of an old friend."

Pauline stopped short, shrinking back. "Oh, mamma!" she said, breathing quickly. "Is this true? Everybody talking. Oh, come away. Oh! what shall we do?"

Madame Fournier, with some motherly presence of mind, only shrugged her shoulders. "My dear child, if we listened to all the advice people give, do you think anybody would ever have a moment's peace? Fontaine is a chatterer, who likes to make gossip where it does not exist."

"Ladies, you are going!" cried the Maire, springing forward as he heard his name. "M. le Comte! Mesdames Fournier are going. I will call their carriage," he continued, talking on to hide his embarrassment.

The music had begun again. Maurice, looking very black and very stiff, came up to the carriage-door.

"Are you coming with us?" said Madame Fournier, very coldly.

"No, no; remain and dance your dance out," said Pauline, not unkindly, but in a chill, sad voice that seemed to come from a heavy heart. Maurice bowed, and we drove away without him, and reached home in silence.

"Well, have you enjoyed your dance?" said Fournier, when he let us in.

CHAPTER IX.

AN EXPLANATION.

"WHEN I saw Madame Fournier again next day, her eyes were red, her face was pale; she looked as if she had not slept, and Fournier himself did not seem to me in much better condition. It was a melancholy morning. The old couple kept together. Fournier avoided De Mesnil; Madame Fournier treated him with ceremonious politeness. Pauline, I think, must have guessed what was coming; she stayed in her room all the morning, and sat over her embroidery, stitching and stitching as women do who are anxious, and who cannot trust themselves to cease from work. De Mesnil did not appear at luncheon.

M. Fournier had pulled his little black velvet skullcap over his eyes, he had tucked his afternoon newspaper, unopened, under his arm; he was walking up and down the hall, crossing and recrossing the great square of light by the open door; his coffee was standing on a table, cooling and untasted; his brows were bent, his steps were hurried and heavy. Fontaine's remarks, as repeated by Madame Fournier, had made a great impression upon him. It was all the more vivid because the Maire had seemed to him to speak his own impressions. It does not matter whether impressions are real or imaginary, the fact of another person unexpectedly speaking out what we have secretly felt seems to give a sudden life to our silence. The feeling becomes a part of real things, it gains speech and action; it is life itself, and ceases to be a criticism. Fournier's idea that Maurice was trifling with his daughter, and not behaving well by her, now seemed to take consistency and shape, voice and action; all his deep tenderness for Pauline turned to indignation against Maurice. But I don't imagine that Fournier, good father as he was, quite understood what it was he was asking of his daughter when he expected her to give up suddenly and immediately the wonderful, new, irresistible interest which had come into her existence. All her life Pauline had wanted affection, and though she had known Maurice only for a few weeks, the instinct to love and to devote herself had been there long before. She had been told that he was the person with whom the rest of her life was to be spent, she had felt that it was to him that her heart went out unhesitatingly; it seemed so natural to love him, so unnatural not to love him. Her affection for him seemed to her

something quite independent of his affection for her—in the same way as a mother's affection for her child does not depend upon that child's feeling for her. When her father called, Pauline came hurrying up to ask what he wanted. What was it he was saying as he marched up and down? He told her that he could allow this trifling no longer, that she must take courage and face the truth, and acknowledge it to herself; that De Mesnil was playing with her, acting dishonourably; it was as if some one had suddenly struck a heavy blow upon her heart.

"What do you mean, papa?" said Pauline, leaning back against the billiard-table. "Why do you say this?" she asked, speaking with dry, parched lips. She had known what was coming, but she had put it away all that day.

The old man was so unhappy at what he had to say that he answered sharply, from pain of the pain he was giving.

"You know what it means as well as I do, Pauline," he said. "I am not a patient man; I cannot wait in silence, and see my daughter insulted, while I, her father, am outraged, defied. Look; can you not see for yourself? Have you no dignity, my child?"

"I hope not," says Pauline. "What has dignity got to do with what one feels in one's heart? Dignity is for outside things."

"Hush, Pauline; don't talk such nonsense!" cried Fournier, exasperated; and indeed I could understand it.

By some unlucky chance, at this very minute our usual visitors came along the terrace, the Captain and the Maire and Madame Valmy, and Maurice, who had been walking up and down an hour past and who had seen them coming, and gone to meet them. The Captain was a little ahead, talking to Fontaine. The two gentlemen did not enter the house at once, but turned up the path that leads to the stables.

Maurice had stopped short, unconscious of the eyes that were fixed upon them. He was gazing up into Sidonie's face. She was half turning away, half accepting his homage.

"To-morrow," cries Fournier, furious, "he goes back to his garret! That devil of a woman may follow him if she chooses. My daughter and I wash our hands of him. Such conduct is not to be entertained by honest people. Do you hear, Pauline?"

"I hear you, papa," says Pauline. "It is enough to break my marriage, without breaking my ears as well;" and then she changed; somehow a great blush came into her face, and she said, "One thing I ask, which is, that you do not condemn Maurice unheard. I shall never care for any one else; never, papa, never; remember that. I shall not forget, even though he may forget me."

"Is this the way you speak? you, a modest girl, brought up at your mother's side," cries Fournier, furious, bothered, and affected.

"Well, then, I am not modest," cries Pauline. "And the thing that I am most grateful to you for is that you have brought me up to think for myself. I am not like Marie des Ormes in her blue and white.

I am not a gentle, obedient, young girl. I respect my parents; I will not act against their wishes. But, oh! that it should be you, of all the people in the world, to make me so unhappy," cried Pauline, with a great burst of tears, throwing herself into her father's arms. "And, oh! I love him, father, with all my heart I love Maurice."

"My child," cried poor Fournier, "it is not I who make you unhappy. Don't, my dear one, I beseech you, do not cry. It is that imbecile out yonder. Look at him, he has forgotten your very existence. May the devil take that woman! The day will come when you will thank your old father."

"Let Maurice come and explain for himself," cried Pauline, very loud and not caring who heard her. "Maurice! Maurice!" she called, going to the door. Maurice heard Pauline's voice calling across the terrace. I saw him turn, say something hastily to his companion, and come hurrying towards the house. His face looked so pale and scared, his eyes so bright and wild, that it seemed to me that he was at least no heartless, indifferent actor in the play that was being played out.

Pauline was still standing at the door when Maurice came up. She went up to him and put out her hand, but he did not take it. She began at once without any preamble.

"I called you; I want to hear the truth from yourself. Do you know what my father is telling me?" she said. "He says that all that has passed between us must come to an end; that you must go back to Paris, and that I must stay here and marry somebody else. What do you say to his plan? What do you say to it?" she repeated shrilly, with her eyes fixed upon his face.

For a minute Maurice was silent.

"What does he say? Who cares what he says?" cried Monsieur Fournier, almost brutally. "All he has got to do now is to hold his tongue. I don't suppose he wishes for any explanations from me. If he does, he may chance to hear things which may not please him."

"You cannot tell me anything I do not already know, that I have not already told myself," said the young man, speaking in a low, thrilling voice, quickly and distinctly. "You may say to me anything you please, it is only what I deserve to hear. The deep respect and gratitude I feel for all your daughter's goodness and ——"

"Be silent!" shouts Fournier, in a rage. "Do you suppose that any one here wants your fine speeches? Take them where they are in request, but do not insult my daughter by such professions after your conduct."

"He does not insult me, papa," Pauline said; "I believe him." There was something touching in the girl's honest accent. "I believe him and so do you,"—and she took her father's hand in both hers as she spoke—"I am not going to marry him. I could not if it is true that he feels as you think. I do not wonder at it." Her voice faltered. "But you see I can understand it all, and I daresay I should do the same as

he; and be ready to leave the people who cared most for me for those I felt I loved the best."

Her steady voice failed; she could scarcely finish her sentence, and she turned from us and ran quickly upstairs to her room, passing Madame Fournier, who was leisurely creaking down from her afternoon nap to wakeful life again. Madame Valmy also appeared at the same instant smiling in the doorway. I wondered she had the courage to walk up as usual. With an impatient exclamation Fournier moved away.

"This is intolerable. Come in here. I have to speak to you in private," he said to the Comte. And he walked to his study followed by the young man.

"What is it, mon ami?" said Madame Fournier, trotting in after them.

"What is happening?" says Madame Valmy, looking round. "Why has everybody run away?" and she settled her laces and gently flirted her fan. "Here you are; have you been to the stables?" she said, as the Captain and Fontaine now joined us. "All the Fournier family are shut up in there," said she, pointing.

"They seem engaged on some very mysterious business," says Madame Valmy, sinking back for a moment in a big chair.

We could hear voices rising and falling behind the closed door, and more than one angry burst from Fournier. I think Madame Valmy might have guessed what it was all about had she tried to do so.

"I am privileged, I will ascertain," said Fontaine, walking with precaution across the hall and knocking carefully at the door.

"Who is there?" shouts Fournier from within.

Fontaine opens the panel a little way, slides in—the door is again shut. Madame Valmy shrugs her shoulders and begins to walk about the room.

"That is a pretty print," says she, looking at a framed plan of Sebastopol which was hanging on the wall. Then with a slight yawn, "I am tired," she said. "I think I should like to go home, if Mademoiselle Mary will make my excuses to Madame Fournier when the mysterious business is over. Take me home, Beauvoir."

Captain Thompson started up delighted. It was not often that his lovely intended would consent to come away under his exclusive escort.

"Yes, you are tired; you should rest," he said. "Yes, let us go at once. You are not strong, Sidonie; you never spare yourself." In this he was quite mistaken, poor man; but if Sidonie had wished to spare herself a scene she was too late, for at this moment Pauline, still looking very pale, but quite composed, came down the stairs again, and as Madame Valmy was going, she called to her to stop.

"Is Maurice already gone down to the village?" Pauline asked.

"Are you going?"

"Why do you ask *me*?" said Madame Valmy. "He is still here, I believe; but I am not his keeper. It is not me he is obliged to marry;" and she turned with a curious feminine dart, and took Captain Thompson's arm.

"Come, Beauvoir," she said; "Mademoiselle Fournier will be best without us."

"No, I want to speak to you," said Pauline, gravely; "stay for a minute."

"I will go outside!" cried Captain Thompson, still quite unconscious. "I will smoke my cigar, and when you young ladies have had your confab, call me back, Sid, for you ought to get home."

He walked away. Madame Valmy was, I think, curious to know what Pauline had to say. She let him go, after a moment's hesitation, and came to meet the girl with an odd smile.

"Have you had a quarrel?" she asked; "do you want me to help you to make it up? I'm afraid it *was* very naughty of him to dance with me all last night; but I have got him into good training for you, and you ought to be grateful," she said, with a laugh.

Sidonie was not used to simple outspoken natures such as Pauline, and she did not calculate upon the consequences of her ill-timed joke.

"Listen," said Pauline, in her dogmatic way; "do not think that I do not blame you because I am silent? Why did you come in our way? I could have made him happy, I think, if it had not been for you. You say you are not going to marry him. Do you think it is any comfort to me that he is to be made unhappy too? Are you acting honestly by us all?"

As Pauline spoke, a sort of light came into her eyes and a tone into her voice. She looked far handsomer at that moment than Madame Valmy, as she stood her ground, sincere, indignant, alive, uttering her protest against wrong.

Madame Valmy seemed to me to grow pale, then grey; all the beautiful colour died out of her cheeks, all the glitter out of her hair; she laughed a nasty little shrill whistling laugh. "What a dear impetuous child you are," she said, "and what foolish, foolish things you take into your silly little head! What have I to do with all this? M. de Mesnil comes to see me. I gave him a lesson in dancing last night. I have a great regard for him, and am only too glad to make him welcome; but, my dear child, do you imagine for one instant that I wish to interfere with your claims upon his attention? You should be more careful before you make such unfounded assertions;" and Madame Valmy drew herself up; she had found her part, so it seemed to me. At first, taken by surprise, she had really not known what to say or what attitude to take. It was one thing to be secretly enjoying Pauline's mortification and her own sense of power and Maurice's unconcealed devotion, and another to be called to account by her outspoken rival; questioned, rebuked, and desired to marry him on the spot. This

seemed the strangest complication of all, and I could quite understand Madame Valmy's objections to pledge herself to any definite course.

"Do you mean that, notwithstanding all that has passed, you are not sure of your feelings?" said Pauline.

At this moment the hall-door opened, and Thompson's head was put in. "Nearly ready?" said he.

"Of this I feel sure, that Captain Thompson will protect me, and that you have strangely forgotten yourself, Pauline, in the way in which you have been speaking!" cried Madame Valmy, greatly relieved by the interruption. "Tell her, Beauvoir," she said, twirling swiftly round, "that you will not see me insulted by cruel suspicion," and, as chance would have it, as she pointed to Pauline, with a sob, the study-door opened, and Maurice, of the pale face, came out. The wretched woman now turned towards him, still holding by Captain Thompson's arm. "M. Maurice," she said, "I will not, cannot believe that you are aware of the things which have been said to me. Oh, it is too dreadful!" and she buried her face in her hands for an instant.

Poor Maurice looked from one to the other. He had himself only just escaped from an agitating scene, in which Mr. Fournier had certainly not spared Madame Valmy; and for a moment it seemed to him as if all the blame at which he had been chafing had been poured out upon her head. She looked at him with such appealing eyes, she was so pale, so trembling. Thompson was stepping forward, also prepared to do battle for his Sidonie, but not quite knowing whom to attack, nor what to complain of. Pauline stood defiant, with flashes of sullen displeasure. She blushed crimson when Maurice looked at her reproachfully. It seemed to him at the time that her looks accused her, poor child.

"I need scarcely tell you that I am not accountable for what may have been said to pain you," he said, in a low, indignant voice. "I can only beg you, madame, who are generous, to forgive those who may have been wanting in generosity."

"Forgive, forgive," said the Captain; "that is not the question. Of course, one forgives real injuries; but people should be careful before giving way to their silly tempers, and remember that they give a great deal of unnecessary pain and annoyance. I am sure Mademoiselle Fournier will be the first to regret this to-morrow morning. Come along, Sid, it is time we got home."

He pulled Madame Valmy's arm through his, and the two walked away together. Maurice was already gone; poor Pauline stood silent, self-reproachful, overwhelmed; it suddenly seemed to her that she had been ridiculous, unkind, unreasonable; she turned pale, hard, stupid; she stood in the centre of the hall; all the fire was gone out of her eyes.

Was it so, had she been ungenerous? Maurice said so, and his look of reproach had pierced her more than his words.

We were all silent in the study that evening; the green lamp was trimmed; books and newspapers lay upon the table, the servants had lighted a wood fire, which was comfortably crackling. Pauline added some logs, and sat down on a low stool before the flame, resting her chin against her hands. Madame Fournier watched her with an anxious face for a time, then settled herself for a nap in the big arm-chair. Fontaine, who had remained at Fournier's request, sat down to a game of *écarté* by the light of the green lamp. There was something homely and tranquil in this interior: the peaceful crackling of the fire, the even glow of the lamp, the quiet slumbers of the old woman in her chimney-corner—all diffused a certain sense of peace and of repose, only all the room seemed to me somehow full of the pain in poor Pauline's sad and aching eyes.

The window was uncurtained. The clouds were drifting across the sky, and the moon was on the wane. Once I thought I heard a cry coming faintly from a long way off. Fontaine put down his cards for an instant.

"It is only some bird or animal," said he.

Pauline started from her dream, and presently went to the window and looked out for a minute, and soon after left the room. She did not come back any more that night. For the first time in her young life, she had been met and overwhelmed by one of those invisible currents of feeling which carry people, and boundaries, and stationary things all before them, until little by little the stormy stream subsides. Pauline, who had been so confident, so intolerant for others, was strangely humbled and overcome by the force of her own emotions. She had despised people who "gave way." What was this strange new power that had laid its relentless hand upon her? She hated herself, but all the same she could not help the suspicions, the self-reproaches, the emotions, which distracted her so cruelly. When generous and well-meaning people suspect others of wrong, it is an almost intolerable pain and humiliation. The thought recurs, it cannot be put away, but it spoils all peace of mind, all tranquil enjoyment of life. Mistrust of oneself is perhaps the worst form of this phase of feeling, and Pauline had suddenly lost confidence in her own infallibility.

CHAPTER X.

THE LODGE IN THE GARDEN OF CUCUMBERS.

WHEN I awoke next morning, she was standing by my bedside. She looked pale and haggard. She had not been able to sleep all night, she told me.

"I want you to do something for me," she said. "I want you to dress quickly and to come with me to the village. Madame Valmy is going. I know it—never mind how I know it. I think my mind would be

more at ease if I could see her once more. Perhaps I was hard upon her yesterday. Am I jealous? Is that what ails me?" She pushed back the curtain from the window and threw it open. All the sweet autumnal light came floating in from the garden without, and a golden withered leaf from the creeper overhanging the balcony dropped on to the wooden floor. The fragrant breath of morning seemed to fill the room. For a minute Pauline stood leaning against the window rail, looking out across the park and the fields beyond, towards the thatched village with its belfry and enclosing poplar-trees. Then she turned, smiling with a sweet look in her face, something like the autumnal sunshine, at once troubled and sincere. She signed to me to lose no time, and left the room.

The house was scarcely awake when we left it, hurrying down by the little side-path leading to the canal. I remember the look of that early morning so well! The delicate fragrant perfume from the burnt leaves, the stir in the foliage, through which the stems were beginning to show, the tranquil faint tones of the sky, and the wheeling flight of a great company of birds high overhead. At the turn of the road we met the postman, in his blue linen smock, with dusty boots. He had a letter for me, he said, and one for M. Fournier, which sent a sudden glow into Pauline's pale cheek, for she recognised M. de Mesnil's writing. I opened my letter as I walked along. It was heavily weighted, and contained the long-missing key for which I had written, and a letter in verse from my kind old uncle, who sometimes amused himself by this style of composition: "Pocket and lock it," "easy and Visy," and so on. I would have read it to Pauline, but she would not listen, and only hurried faster and faster along the road. She would not tell me at first how it was that she knew of Madame Valmy's plans, but after a while she suddenly said, "I do not know why I do not tell you at once. Maurice came up last night. I saw him coming when I was at the window, and I went to meet him, and he told me of this. He told me other things," she said with a strange sort of burst. "It all seems so miserable, so strange! Will you be silent if I trust you? He adores her. She has promised to marry him in a year. Why did he tell me? Why did he tell me?"

"Why, indeed!" said I. "Pauline, he is a miserable creature." But Pauline would not let me blame him.

"It was to exonerate her, he told me," she said. "He asked me to think more kindly of her. And now," said Pauline, "I do not know whether or not I think more kindly of her."

"But is she not going to tell the Captain?" I asked. "Is she going on deceiving him? Are you not going to tell him, Pauline?"

"I!" cried the girl, with a sort of laugh. "Do you think it my place? The worst part is to come," she said, in a dry, matter-of-fact voice. "Madame Valmy has assured Maurice that the Captain is ill—that he has not a year to live, and that is why she keeps silence. It might kill him, she says, to know the truth. For my part, I had rather die of a truth than live upon a lie, I think. But Madame Valmy likes

to arrange her life to her circumstances," and Pauline broke off; a burning blush came over her face.

"I think you should speak to your father," I said.

"I want to see her first," said Pauline, now quite piteous. "She might say something to undo all this horrible doubt. Maurice believes in her. For his sake I try and believe in her too."

When we came to the Pavilion the great gates were open; the chickens were pecking in the courtyard; there seemed to be not a soul about the place.

"They went at seven o'clock, driving with the luggage. Madame Coqueau is to come and keep the house," said little Jeanne Picard, who was peeping in at the gate. "She has not yet arrived; she is gone to see to the cows."

Pauline did not answer. She stood still for an instant—then she walked in, crossed the yard, mounted the stone steps, and marched straight into the drawing-room, where all the chairs and tables were pushed about just as they had been left the night before. The newspaper lay on the floor; one of the Captain's gloves had been forgotten in a chair; the shutters were half-closed, the daylight came freshly shining in and reflected from the flower-glasses and the pretty ornaments all about the room. On a sofa a little piece of work was lying. It was a cigar-case, of embroidered canvas, with an elaborate M interwoven with coronets. Pauline took it up, looked at it for an instant, flung it down once more, and then suddenly dropping into the corner of the sofa, hid her face away, and I could see that she was crying. I was obliged to rouse her almost immediately, for I heard some one coming. As usual it was Fontaine. He had seen us pass by, and now entered the room with an exclamation—fresh from his morning toilet.

Pauline made an effort, choked down her tears, and met him quietly. As I think of it all it seems like a vague sort of dream; so disjointed, so sudden and tragical were the events which followed.

"You are too late," said the Maire, cheerfully. "Our good friends are gone! They have stolen a march upon us. The Captain drove Madame Valmy to the station early this morning; they were to take the train at Etournelles: he told me he wanted to leave some directions with his manager there. His man was to take the luggage to Corbeil and rejoin them there. Mademoiselle Julianne was not with her mistress. I don't know how she went," said Fontaine, thoughtfully. "Possibly she started last night. I don't know what called the Captain away. I think he was anxious, and wished to consult a physician."

"For his health?" said Pauline, quickly.

"For her health," said Fontaine. "He told me himself that she was strange—hysterical; that he was not easy, and did not trust Jobard entirely," said the Maire, lightly.

"Madame Valmy not well!" said Pauline, vehemently. "Monsieur

Fontaine, is it only Madame Valmy you have been anxious about? Tell me, do you believe what she tells people in confidence, that he is suffering from a mortal disease?"

She had spoken at last, and Monsieur Fontaine seemed taken aback.

"A mortal disease," he repeated. "Pray explain yourself, Mademoiselle. I really cannot follow you."

"How can I explain myself?" cried Pauline, all excited. "Is it my business? Am I a spy set to watch other people? I am a wicked, suspicious girl, Monsieur Fontaine. I came here to confess to her, but she is gone, and I don't know—I don't know what I mean." And she burst out crying once more and hid her face in her hands.

"My dear lady, you are ill—out of sorts. No wonder, after all that has occurred. Come away, come home with me. Let us consult Jobard; that good fellow will give you some soothing mixture," cried the Maire, very kind, full of concern. "What is it? do not be alarmed. Yes. I too hear something. What can it be?" said he, seeing me looking about. "Wait here—pray wait here; I will return," he cried, divided between his concern for Pauline and his intelligent interest in everything going on.

What was it? I had heard it for some time. It seemed a dull muffled knocking, and now and then, so I thought, came the echo of a human voice calling out, so faintly that one might well mistake it. "It is not in the village," I said.

"It is something in the house," said Pauline, decidedly, listening with all her might.

"Can it be the little Picards at their play?" said the Maire, doubtfully.

"No. I think it is in the garret," said Mademoiselle Fournier, suddenly hurrying out of the room. The Pavilion, as indeed all the houses in the village, had empty garrets under the roof where people hung their clothes to dry, and kept their lumber and their apples from one year's end to another. I followed her as she ran up the wooden staircase and climbed the flight which led to the topmost garret, of which she threw the door wide open.

All was silent here. The place was empty. The light was streaming in through the sashless windows; a few white clothes were still hanging upon a line; the rats and mice were safe in their holes.

"There is nothing here," said Pauline. "Come down—it must be from below."

Fontaine was standing, looking very pale, at the foot of the stairs as we came down.

"The sound comes from the cellar out of the dining-room," said he. "There is something shut up in there."

I knew the ways of the house—having lived there—better than they did, and I could now tell them which was the way.

"This is the door which leads to the outer cellar," said I. "Here is a key that fits it," and I pulled mine out from my pocket.

"Effectively there is no key in the door," said Fontaine. "How do you come by this one?"

"It is not wanted, the door is only bolted," said Pauline, who had taken the key from my hand, and drawn back the massive iron bolt as she spoke. When she opened the heavy door a damp breath of vault-like atmosphere seemed to meet us. The knocking became louder and more distinct; and the voice—shall I ever forget the strange terror of that despairing voice?—seemed to be coming out of the darkness, and calling and calling.

"Take care; there are steps within," I whispered, too frightened to speak out.

Pauline, however, walked in unhesitatingly. She swept against some bottle, and it fell with a crash upon the ground. Suddenly the knocking ceased—it seemed as if the person within was listening too. Fontaine, who had left us, came back with a light almost immediately, and then we could see the dark damp vault and the flight of steps before us. I had often fetched the wine out of this outer cellar, and peeped down the black flight which led to the inner vault, where Madame Valmy kept her best cider, so I had been told. Now as the light flashed I saw it all in its usual order. There were the bottles; the one Pauline knocked over Fontaine picked up and put back in its place. There stood the two chests that we had put away; there was the dark flight leading to the mildewy door of the lower cellar. It was fast closed with bars and rusty-headed nails.

"Open, open, open, madame!" screamed the voice; and somehow in one moment we all recognised it as that of Julianne. "If you do not open I will knock the house down and denounce you. Open, open—I know you are there; I hear your silk dress on the stones. Speak—why don't you speak?—for pity speak. Have you spared him? Mercy for us both—mercy, mercy. Valmy was a monster, but this one is a good man. Spare him—spare me. Have I ever said one word? I will be silent. Only spare me. Oh, Madame, I entreat you, have pity."

"Julienne, is it you?" said Pauline, falteringly. But Fontaine signed to her to be silent, and put his hand on his mouth.

"What do you say?" cried the voice; and the hands within began to thump and bang again. "If you do not let me out I will live, I will escape to denounce you. Let me out—let me out."

"I am not Madame Valmy; I am Pauline Fournier," said Pauline, speaking very loud. "Do not be afraid, Julianne. We will open the door and let you out."

There came a half-suppressed scream of horror from within—then silence.

"Perhaps our outer key would fit this door too," said I.

"No," said Pauline, "I have tried it. It will not go in."

"This is horrible. We must get the locksmith at once," said Fontaine. "Will you ladies wait here and tranquillise the poor thing if you can? She is half out of her mind."

"Yes," said Pauline. And then, as soon as he was gone, still calling through the door, she tried to reassure the wild creature within.

"Is it you, Mademoiselle? Don't leave me—don't leave me!" shrieked Julianne once more. "I am mad—quite mad! Oh, do not heed what I say." Then suddenly she seemed to remember herself. "Oh, what have I done? Leave me. Lose no time—follow them—warn her. Tell her you know all. And oh, for pity, Mademoiselle, spare us—do not betray her. Oh, for pity's sake do not betray her."

I own that I was trembling in every limb—the time seemed endless.

"M. Fontaine is a long time," said Pauline. Should you mind going to see if any one is coming. Oh, please do go," she said, "go to Leroux and tell him to come at once and open the door for us. There is no time to lose."

"Shan't you be frightened," I said, "here alone?"

"No," said Pauline, impatiently. "Only go, please go."

CHAPTER XI.

FAREWELL TO VISY.

My strength seemed to return with the fresh air. It seemed strange to come out alive, and breathing and unhurt, into the commonplace street. I had not far to go. The locksmith lived at the end of the village, by the church. As I hurried along I met the Curé, who looked at me and seemed about to speak, but I passed him quickly. Even then I noticed a little group in a doorway. It seemed to me that they also looked up, broke off, and then began to speak again. I was too much excited and preoccupied to pay much attention to stray looks and words, but in my horrible agitation and excitement it already seemed to me that our secret had spread, and that people were suspecting and discussing the truth in hurried whispers. Had Fontaine been wasting time making confidences all along the road? I did him injustice. The locksmith's door was closed, and for some minutes I knocked and thumped in vain. At last I heard slow steps, and when the door was opened, Leroux's aged mother appeared on the threshold, with a child in her arms.

"Be quiet," said she. "My daughter-in-law is ill. What do you want?"

"I want your son," said I, breathless. "M. Fontaine wants him at once—it is of importance that he should come at once."

"He can't come," said the old woman, shaking her head. "He was fetched—have not you heard of what has happened? There has been an accident to a carriage." Here the child began to cry, and its grandmother to hush it on her shoulder. "Eh! yes; an accident," said the old woman, slowly. "The Captain's horse took fright down by the peat-

fields. The carriage-wheels are off. My son has gone to see if he can fix them on again, to bring back the unfortunate wounded."

"The wounded!—who is wounded?" I asked, all dazed.

"No one knows for certain," said the old woman, still hushing the wailing child. Some say it is the lady, some say it is the Captain who is killed."

Then a voice called from within. She went back, still hushing the child, and abruptly closed the door. It was all very miserable. I turned very faint. I felt it a great relief at that minute to see Fournier turning the corner by the church. Fontaine was with him. The two were walking rapidly, and Fontaine was carrying some tools in his hands. I ran to meet them. They were speaking excitedly. Fournier quickly broke off to ask me why I had left Pauline alone.

"She sent me," said I. "The time seemed so long. Do not wait for me now. Please go to her."

"You had better wait outside and rest," said Fournier. "Poor child! all this has been too much for you."

"And there is more to come," cried Fontaine. "Ah! Mademoiselle, have you heard of this terrible accident? There is hope for the Captain, M. Fournier tells me. It is too much—it is all too terrible!" and he hurried after Fournier, who was walking with his longest strides.

I confess that I could hardly stand; the sunny street, the voices, the horrible events of that morning seemed crowding down upon me in dizzy circles. I think a child came up and said something, but I could not answer. When I reached the Pavilion, I sank down upon the stone steps, for I could not stand, and for a minute I waited to collect my thoughts. As I sat there I could hear the voices inside the house exclaiming, the sound of the crowbar forcing open the lock, and the quiet strokes of the church clock striking nine, followed by the rumble of distant wheels. And then something happened which seemed to me, perhaps, the most strange and unexpected event of all. The kitchen door slowly opened, and Julianne came quietly out in her big black cloak. She had on her usual tidy cap tied under her chin, and a basket on her arm. She looked at me, but did not speak, brushed past me, and walked quickly. I was so startled, I only watched her go across the court. At the gate she met the omnibus just starting for the station at Corbeil. She signed to it to stop, got in, and before I could recover from my surprise, she was gone. Next minute I heard a final crash within, and loud exclamations, and then as I ran in to tell of my strange impression, a dream, a reality, I scarcely knew which, I met Fournier with his daughter clinging to him in tears, followed by the Maire in his shirt-sleeves, in a most extraordinary agitation.

"Was there ever anything so utterly unbelievable! Mademoiselle, could you not have sworn to her voice? There is nothing, absolutely no one in the cellars. Do you understand me? No one—Julianne was not there."

"Julienne passed me a minute ago," I said. "She went across the court. She went off in the diligence to Corbeil." And as I spoke I looked at Pauline, who still stood silent and sobbing by her father's side.

"Oh ! Mademoiselle," said Fontaine, turning upon Pauline. "How could you play me this trick ? Then it was you who let her out ! But are you both demented ? You let this witness escape you !" He could not finish for agitation and excitement. Pauline looked imploringly at her father through her tears.

"Well, Pauline !" said he, quietly assuming the fact ; "speak—why did you let her out, or rather why did you not tell us that you had done so ?"

Pauline tried to answer, but she turned pale and very faint for a minute, and could only cling to her father's arm.

The hot sun came pouring down into the little courtyard as we all stood there. The shadows were striking, black and fierce. Pauline waited silent by her father's side, apparently sullen or downcast, and tired out ; Fontaine, perfectly bewildered, and still in his shirt-sleeves, stood looking from her to me. The ducks, missing their accustomed meal, came straggling up to be fed, and presently one and another neighbour came in with scared looks and hushed voices. Fournier took his daughter upon his arm and drew her a little aside ; he wanted to question her in private, and he also had miserable news to tell ; she burst into piteous sobs, and he led her away through the crowd of children and peasant people. I followed with kind Madame Bougie from the grocer's shop, not a little grateful for her friendly exclamations and sympathies. Fournier left us in the shop while he went back to fetch the pony-carriage, for poor Pauline was quite spent and could scarcely stand. Madame Bougie took us into the back parlour with the glass door that opened to the garden. She brought us glasses of orange-flower water, that panacea of French emotions, and her little boy ran in with a nosegay from the garden. She would let in no one else until Fournier's return. Fontaine came to the door, but she drove him off. I was glad of it, for Pauline began to shiver nervously when she heard his voice. I thought it might be a relief to her to speak, and I asked her how it happened that she let Julienne out after I left.

Pauline looked at me hard. "Was it wrong ?" said she. Then she started up, and went to the window and looked out ; then came back to me. "I tried the key a second time and found it fitted. When you first gave it to me I had turned it wrong. She came out looking all wild," said Pauline. "Oh, she looked so terrible. She had hurt her hands ; they were bleeding when she held them up, and she implored me and implored me to let her go. She told me she had seen Valmy's face in the darkness close beside her, reproaching her for the past ; that she knew he would have been still alive if they had cared for him when he was ill ; that he died of their neglect. That is what Julienne said,

and she had let him die without remorse, and Madame Valmy knew it."

"Oh! how horrible it all is! Oh! what have I done?" cried poor Pauline. She was so agitated I did not like to ask any more questions it seemed best to leave her to herself.

Pauline was still very much upset when Fournier returned. She told him the whole story, with not a little agitation. He listened without a word.

"Oh, papa," she said, "I will confess to you that I have been half beside myself with such miserable suspicions that I can scarcely bear to think of them. I have not known what to do or how to bear it all. When I heard that Madame Valmy said the poor little Captain must die, some horrible dread came over me which haunted me like an evil spirit; and then when Julianne implored me to let her go, I still believed—I thought if she warned her mistress, it might yet be time to prevent I knew not what evil. Oh, papa, as I think it over, it seems to me like a crime that I have committed. To think a cruel thing is such a hopeless wrong, and now, now it is too late to repent. Oh, what shall I do, what shall I do?"

Poor Pauline was quite overcome by the events of the last few hours which had made clear so much unhappiness. She was trembling in every limb. Fournier did not attempt to comfort her.

"We are all liable to mistake," he said; "all ready to judge our neighbours harshly at times. You and I have, perhaps, been hard upon that poor woman, Pauline, and we must bear our punishment. There is poor Thompson, he has done no wrong, he is dreadfully stricken. It is fortunate that they brought him to your mother to nurse, it was the nearest house."

Then he went on to tell us that the horse had taken fright at the sudden working of the poor Captain's machine, and galloped across the field. Madame Valmy had been thrown against a stone and killed upon the spot; the Captain had fallen under the carriage, and the wheel had passed over him as he lay. It was thought at first that he too was hopelessly hurt, but the accounts were now more reassuring.

How well I remember our drive back to the château through the pretty autumnal avenues, over the bright brown carpet of leaves that had fallen the night before. Pauline was sitting with her head upon her father's shoulder, quite silent and scared. I too felt utterly stupefied and bewildered until kind Madame Fournier met us on the terrace and put her arms about us. I shall never forget her goodness and motherly tenderness during all the days that immediately followed the disaster. The poor Captain lay between life and death; Pauline too, was ill, and requiring the tenderest care; Madame Fournier's motherly looks seemed to fall with comfort on one and on another. She undertook to enlighten Fontaine as to the real events of that morning.

There is not very much more to tell of these sad things which

happened during my visit to my friends. Jobard, when cross-questioned by Fournier and the Maire, solemnly affirmed that the cause of Valmy's death was cholera. The symptoms were unmistakable, the patient had rallied, and seemed recovering, when he suddenly sank from exhaustion. Jobard himself was present at the time, and had been administering stimulants. Fournier consulted with Fontaine and came to the conclusion that there was no reason to doubt Jobard's professional opinion deliberately given. One little fact is worth mentioning which went far to remove some of our vague suspicions, and to ease our minds. One day the Captain began to speak of the events of that fatal morning, and told Fontaine with a sigh that he believed the accident had turned upon the merest chance. "Just as we were starting," he said, "I went back and saw that the cellar-door had not been closed. . . . Why does one remember such thing? I used to think poor Julienne had a weakness for my wine-bottles. "Look there," said he very sadly, holding up his right hand. "I believe that terrible accident came of my turning that key. I sprained my hand against the door, and I was holding the whip and the reins in my left hand when the horse took fright."

One of my cousins was taken ill, and I was sent for home long before the Captain was sufficiently recovered to leave his room. It was perhaps best for him to lie there quietly with the good, kind, worthy Fourniers to keep watch over him, and to prevent the many rumours and suspicions from without from wounding him afresh as he lay upon his bed of sickness.

I have not been to Visy since the day when Pauline kissed me and said farewell by the old gateway; but I can still see her before me, as she was then, when I looked my last at her honest kind face, and at her home with all its friendly doors and windows open to the autumn sunshine. The Captain waved a thin hand from the balcony where they had carried him. Monsieur Fournier was waiting to drive me to the station. I remember the scent of the clematis about the terrace; the sound of the cheerful country servants' voices calling, the glistening of the water as we crossed the little bridge over the canal.

There is one more fact I have to relate concerning my friends at Visy. One day, about a twelvemonth later, I received a printed form directed in Captain Thompson's handwriting, which gave me no little surprise. It was the formal announcement by M. and Madame Fournier of the Château of Visy le Roy, and by Miss Marianne and Miss Eliza Thompson of Lancaster, of a marriage contracted according to the Catholic and the Protestant rites, between their daughter Miss Pauline Hermance Louise Mélanie Fournier and their nephew Captain John Beauvoir Thompson, of Amphlett House, near Lancaster.

Forgotten Jokes.

Good jokes, as a rule, confirm the truth of the Pythagorean philosophy : they never die, but they pass through a thousand different shapes. Some there are, however, of rare excellence, yet made of perishable materials, and doomed by their very appositeness to live only with the memory of the facts which gave them birth. To take an instance :—When the Prince of Orange came to England, at the time of the Revolution, five of the seven bishops who had been sent to the Tower declared in his favour, while two held obstinately aloof. This occasioned Dryden's admirable epigram, "that seven golden candlesticks had been sent to the Tower to be assayed, and five of them proved to be prince's metal." This is a good specimen of stereotyped wit ; no second edition of it, with alterations, is possible. On the other hand, take a remark of Garrick's, which, under circumstances slightly similar, could evidently be utilised again. Mr. Twiss, we are told, a romancing traveller, was talking of a church he had seen in Spain a mile and a half long. "Bless me!" said Garrick ; "how broad was it?" "About ten yards," said Twiss. "This is, you'll observe, gentlemen," said Garrick, to the company, "not a round lie, but differs from his other stories, which are generally as broad as they are long." Obviously such a joke, when found, is to be made a note of for discreet use on a future occasion. A dexterous person, desirous of being uncivil, might even lead up the conversation to it. Probably, too, it is much older than the age of Garrick, who, again, was a gentleman, and very unlikely to say anything so atrociously rude, though he is credited with having given Sterne a severe dressing. It is painful to remember that the author of *Tristram Shandy* treated his wife very badly ; notwithstanding which he was sufficiently ill advised to maunder one day, in the presence of Garrick, in praise of conjugal love and fidelity. "The husband," said Sterne, "who behaves unkindly to his wife, deserves to have his house burnt over his head." "If you think so," quietly remarked Garrick, "I hope your house is insured."

Indeed, though we frequently speak of our "rude" ancestors, we never, perhaps, understand how very rude they were till we look into an old jest-book. No wonder duels were once common ; all the humanitarian sentiment in the world could not have put a stop to them, had not men also begun to rule their tongues. The point of a sarcasm can be felt in an uncultured as well as in a polished age ; only in the one wit is answered with wit, while in the other the happiest retort is sometimes

held to be a crack on the head. Henry I., King of England, being ridiculed in a clever lampoon, could think of no brighter rejoinder than to have the author's eyes put out. Macaulay's, if not every, schoolboy can remember the line of Nævius on the Metelli, and the dull but extremely pertinent answer of that noble family, which was to cast him into prison. One should remember, to the credit of Queen Bess, that she could now and then brook a tart rejoinder. It is reported that she once saw in her garden a gentleman to whom she had held out hopes of advancement, which he discovered were slow of realisation. Looking out of the garden, her Majesty said to him, in Italian, "What does a man think of, Sir Edward, when he thinks of nothing?" The answer was, "He thinks, madam, of a woman's promise." The Queen drew back her head, but was heard to say, "Well, Sir Edward, I must not argue with you; anger makes dull men witty, but it keeps them poor." A smarter retort than the English courtier's was that of Frederick the Great's coachman, when he had upset the carriage containing his master. Frederick began to swear like a trooper; but the coachman coolly asked, "And you, did you never lose a battle?" The king replied with a good-natured laugh; always, doubtless, the most agreeable of royal answers. Perhaps Lord Chesterfield met the impertinence of a servant as well as any other man. He was dining at an inn, where the plates and dishes were very dirty. Lord C., complaining, was coolly informed by the waiter, for his consolation, that "every one must eat a peck of dirt before he dies." "That may be true," said Chesterfield, "but no one is obliged to eat it all at a meal."

Perhaps one of the most cruel things ever said was contained in Foote's advice to the Duke of Norfolk of that day. On a masquerade night, his Grace consulted the famous actor as to what character he should appear in. "Don't go disguised," said Foote, "but assume a new character—go sober." It should be remembered, however, that to be drunk was hardly thought discreditable in the eighteenth century. Water-drinkers in that generation were designated, not tectotallers, but milk-sops—a word which still carries reproach with it; though, in truth, a man who should drink nothing but milk would be stronger, both in nerve and muscle, than a man who drank frequently of gunpowder tea—to leave whisky out of the question.

It was the successor of the Duke of Norfolk in question who consulted Abernethy for some ailment, and was asked whether he had ever tried the remedy of a clean shirt. Before his accession to the title, when he was called by courtesy Earl of Surrey, he was in the House of Commons on the Whig side. It was a question one day among the chiefs of the party as to who would be the proper person to move a certain amendment. Fox finally decided in the words, "*Saddle Black Surrey* for the field to-morrow." In contemporary caricatures, this nobleman's little peculiarities are illustrated with unsavoury minuteness of detail. Yet he was a good man, a sincere Liberal, and had the courage of his

convictions. It was he who, under the Pittite reign of terror, proposed the toast of "The People, Our Sovereign," for which he was deprived of his colonelcy and his commission as lord lieutenant, while his name was publicly struck off the list of Privy Councillors by the King's own gracious hand. Fox's name was effaced at the same time, because he had been present at the banquet. Moreover, the great orator had very early begun to say things which sounded ill in the ears of Majesty. During the War of Independence, Lord North was once exulting over the Opposition on the publication of a *Gazette Extraordinary*, to the effect that New York had been taken. Fox answered, "It is a mistake, sir; New York is not conquered, only it is, like the Ministry, *abandoned*." His commentary on a passage in the Psalms consisted of a still neater pun. Some person had asked him what was the meaning of the verse, "He clothed himself with cursing, like as with a garment." "I think," said Fox, "it is clear enough; the man had a habit of swearing."

But the wit, *par excellence*, of the Whig party, it is needless to observe, was Sheridan, who has been called the English Hyperides, as Fox was unquestionably the English Demosthenes. Few, indeed, of his jokes are forgotten, and those that are deserve to be. For occasionally, if the truth must be told, Sheridan was merely snappish, and could find nothing better than an unworthy *tu quoque* with which to reply to a hostile criticism. When the *School for Scandal* was first acted, Mr. Cumberland was asked to give his opinion of it. "I am astonished," said he, "that the town can be so completely mistaken as to think there is either wit or humour in this comedy. I went to see it, and it made me as 'grave as a judge.'" Of course good-natured friends made haste to communicate with Sheridan, who merely said, "Mr. Cumberland is very ungrateful, for when I went to see his tragedy of the *Carmelite*, I did nothing but laugh from the beginning to the end." Perhaps this was irresistible, but it was poor enough—for Sheridan. It belongs essentially to the order of commonplace jokes. So does a capital one of Dr. Garth's; for there are good plain jokes as there are good plain dishes, which can still be relished by *gourmets* who know the flavour of truffles. Garth was attending Marlborough, and had prescribed a very disagreeable potion, which the illustrious warrior strongly objected to take. Duchess Sarah, whose one merit was to love her husband, joined her entreaties to those of the doctor, exclaiming (with not unwonted vehemence), "I'll be hanged if it doesn't cure you." "There, my lord," quietly interposed Garth; "you had better swallow it. You will gain either way."

Numberless have been the jokes against physicians and the art of healing; one of the best, because unintentional, was made by a French lady, whom we may call Madame X., and who was in the habit of consulting her physician, Dr. Z., daily, between the hours of two and three. The doctor was a witty and charming man, and they talked of every

subject under heaven. One day, however, the doctor came and was denied admittance. He thought there must be some mistake, and ordered the servant to announce him again. This time the lady sent down a very polite message, informing the doctor that "she was grieved beyond measure at being obliged to deny herself the pleasure of his company, *but she was very ill.*" Doctors themselves, however, have said the hardest things of their craft. Radcliffe used to threaten his brethren of the faculty "that he would leave the whole mystery of physic behind him, written on a half-sheet of paper." The medical men of the day revenged themselves for his contempt by denying him any knowledge of physic. In the same way, Nelson was said by the one or two enemies he had made, or rather who had made themselves, to possess no knowledge of navigation.

Dr. Radcliffe, by the way, had an extremely objectionable habit; namely, that of leaving his bills unsettled. In his days, each Londoner had to pave the street in front of his own door—at all events, the parish would not pave it for him. A certain paviour, who had been employed by the doctor, after long and fruitless attempts to get paid, caught him just getting out of his carriage at his own door in Bloomsbury Square, and set upon him. "Why, you rascal," said Radcliffe, "do you pretend to be paid for such a piece of work? Why, you have spoiled my pavement, and then covered it over with earth to hide your bad work." "Doctor," quoth the paviour, "mine is not the only bad work that the earth hides." "You dog, you," said the doctor; "are you a wit? You must then be poor, so come in;" and he paid him. Talleyrand, less good-natured, jested with his creditors and did not pay them.

Avarice and a want of punctuality in paying bills are not often combined, your miser being in mortal dread of writs of law-courts; but Radcliffe is reported to have been close-fisted as well as inexact in his accounts. Probably both the one tendency and the other have been exaggerated by his detractors; but there is a whimsical anecdote in reference to one of the doctor's supposed failings, which will bear repetition. Attending an intimate friend during a dangerous illness, he declared, in an unusual strain of generosity, that he would receive no fee. At last, when the cure was complete, and the physician was taking his leave, "I have put every day's fee," said the patient, "in this purse, my dear doctor; nor must your goodness get the better of my gratitude." The doctor eyed the purse, counted the days of his attendance in a moment, and then, extending his hand by a kind of professional mechanical motion, replied, "Well, I can hold out no longer; single I could have refused the guineas, but all together they are irresistible."

That was not a bad joke on the medical profession which was made by a clergyman in the time of Cromwell, who was deprived of his living for nonconformity. This parson, a harmless man enough, went about saying to his friends, "That if he were deprived, it should cost a hundred men their lives." Summoned before a magistrate, he thus inter-

preted his words : "Should I lose my benefice, I am resolved to practise physic, and then I may, if I get patients, kill a hundred men."

Priests, indeed, were witty long before laymen, and they have at all times contributed their fair share to the world's stock of good sayings. Among the less known is the happy answer of a bishop to a clergyman of less than moderate abilities, who demanded a licence to preach. "I grant you permission," replied his lordship, "but nature refuses it." *Contrà*, it was a fine compliment that Louis XIV. paid to Massillon. "My father," he said, "I have heard several great orators, and been pleased at their discourses; whenever I hear you, I am very ill-pleased with myself."

The Abbé Boileau, brother of the poet, has left on record a fine specimen of the courtly compliment. The great Condé, on entering the city of Sens, was formally harangued, according to the custom of the times, by the Dean, in the name of the Cathedral Chapter. The Prince leant forward, as if to hear the orator more distinctly, but in fact it was his intention to put him out of countenance. The Dean (Boileau) saw the move, and turned it to his own advantage. He pretended to be much agitated, and began his speech as though labouring under great agitation. "Your highness," he said, "must not be surprised to see me so nervous and so much agitated on appearing before you at the head of these inoffensive ecclesiastics, for if I were now facing you at the head of a large army I should tremble much more than I do." Condé rewarded the Dean with an invitation to dinner.

Perhaps those deserve most credit who have remembered to be witty under difficulties. Bassompierre, Marshal of France, was confined for twelve years in the Bastille, during which time, his diet being not illiberal and his facilities for exercise small, he grew extremely fat. On his release the old soldier presented himself at court, when the Queen thought it a good joke to ask him how soon he meant to lie in. To which the Marshal replied, "May it please your Majesty, I am only waiting for a wise woman" (*sage femme*). Anne of Austria had at least the good sense to put up with the retort. The King, Louis XIII., asked him his age; the Marshal replied that he was fifty. The King expressed some surprise at the answer, for Bassompierre looked quite sixty. The latter continued, "Sire, I deduct twelve years passed in the Bastille, because I did not employ them in your service." Before his imprisonment, Bassompierre had not always been too careful of his language in addressing Louis himself. He was one day describing his embassy to Spain and related how he made his solemn entry into Madrid, seated on a mule. "What a joke," exclaimed his Majesty—"an ass seated on a mule!" "Yes, Sire," assented the other, "and what made the joke better was that I represented you." The Kings of France at this epoch must have been powerful indeed, and the distance between them and the most powerful of their subjects must have been well defined, when one of them could forgive such a liberty.

The finest specimens of wit are not always the most appreciated;

while there is a rough, not to say brutal, style of joking which has often been found effective. A French general once levied a contribution on a German religious house. The monks pretended they could not understand the French in which the order was couched, whereupon the general said he would put his request into Latin. It ran thus: "Si non payatis, brulabo abbatiam vestram." 'Twas a sorry joke, but had wonderful success, for the money was paid within an hour. It is so easy for a general at the head of a victorious army to break a jest which shall be applauded, or, at all events, one of which the merits shall be seriously taken to heart.

As for kings, Scott truly observes that they can always, if not the most dull-witted of men, obtain conversational triumphs, seeing that they are at liberty to introduce any subject they please, continue the discussion as long as it suits them, and close it at their good pleasure. They can, moreover, generally say as many ill-natured things as they please, without fear lest their victims should have the courage of a Bassompierre. Of really witty kings there have probably been but few. Napoleon and Louis XIV. made fine speeches on occasion, but they cannot be credited with any genuine specimens of impromptu eloquence. Perhaps the wittiest—certainly one of the wittiest—of princes, was Charles II. of England. The best of his sayings are too well known to need repetition, but here is one that has escaped a good many collections of ana. It is given in an amusing little work, entitled *Flowers of Wit*, by the Rev. Henry Kett (London, 1814). "This facetious monarch," writes the compiler, "asked Dr. Stillingfleet how it happened that he always read his sermons before him, when he was informed that he always preached without book elsewhere. The doctor told the King that the air of so noble an audience, and particularly the royal presence, made him afraid to trust himself. 'But, in return, will your Majesty give me leave to ask you a question too? Why do you read your speeches, when you can have none of the same reasons?' 'Why truly, doctor,' replied the King, 'your question is a very plain one, and so will be my answer. I have asked my subjects so often, and for so much money, that I am ashamed to look them in the face.'"

Several more of the anecdotes given above are due to the industry of Mr. Kett, who avows in his preface that he loved a joke, but apparently entertained some scruples as to whether it were indeed lawful for a pastor to occupy his time in so frivolous a pursuit as the compilation of a jest-book. He comforted himself, however, with the examples of Erasmus, of Camden, and of Bacon. The last is said to have been an extraordinary instance of precocious wit. Queen Elizabeth asked him, when he was quite a child, how old he was. "Madam," gravely answered the little creature, "I was two years old when you began your happy reign." Unfortunately it is impossible to forget that Elizabeth succeeded her sister on November 17, 1558, and that Bacon was born on January 22, 1561. A more authentic sentence of Bacon's belongs to the period of his old age and disgrace. Gondomar, the Spanish ambas-

sador, called upon him after his condemnation by the House of Peers, and intending to taunt him in his misfortunes, said, "My lord, I wish you a merry Easter." "And to you, señor," replied the ex-Chancellor, "I wish a merry Passover;" thus reminding the ambassador of his Jewish descent, which was the most cutting retort that could be made to a Spaniard.

It was truly said by Arthur Lord Capel that "sharp and bitter jests are blunted more by neglecting than by responding, except they be suddenly and wittily retorted; but it is no imputation to a man's wisdom to use a silent scorn." It was of this model Christian gentleman that Lord Clarendon wrote: "He was a man that whoever shall after him deserve best of the English nation, he can never think himself undervalued, when he shall hear that his courage, virtue, and fidelity are laid in the balance with, and compared to, that of the Lord Capel." Lord Capel's saying may be termed a familiar scriptural maxim inculcated from the world's point of view. So Thackeray, in a similar, but more genial, mood, reminded his hearers that "if fun was good, truth was still better, and love best of all."

Wit without malice is like the wine of Paradise which exhilarates, so Moslem doctors aver, without the fear of reaction. For he who has spoken an uncharitable word, how wittily soever, will surely regret it when the occasion is past. If he never has cause to repent of it, then he is still more unhappy, for he must need a long discipline of sorrow, which will not probably be accomplished in this world. And yet a snub does at times require to be administered for the benefit of society, and some persons must be summarily suppressed that others may breathe in peace. A good specimen of the proper method of rebuking impertinence was furnished by the Rev. John Carter, incumbent of Bramford, in Suffolk, a man at once learned and modest. He was dining at the house of a worthy alderman of Ipswich, when one of the company boasted of his own acquirements, and, growing bold with impunity, proceeded to such lengths that he defied any one present to start a question in theology or philosophy to which he could not give a ready and a satisfactory answer. An awful silence fell on the guests at this proposal, and for a few seconds no sound was heard but the clatter of knives and forks; when Mr. Carter looked up and said, "My plate furnishes me with a question to pose you. Here is a fish that has always lived in salt water; pray tell me why he should come out a fresh fish, and not a salt one?" This simple query utterly discomfited the bully of conversation, who for the remainder of the feast ate much, and spoke little.

To define wit is probably impossible. The name the French give it—*esprit*—of itself marks an essence which can be described by no material lines. It seems to consist of humorous, picturesque, or poetic analogies, but humour and poetry are themselves hard to define. Dryden has said—

A thousand different shapes wit wears,
Comely in thousand shapes appears :
'Tis not a tale, 'tis not a jest,
Admir'd with laughter at a feast ;
Nor florid talk which can this title gain,—
The proofs of wit for ever must remain.

Which lines convince one that "glorious John" preferred beating about the bush to venturing on a clear definition. Alphonse Karr says that "Wit is Reason armed." *Naïveté*, a word which we have been forced to borrow from the French, though we can assuredly appreciate it full as well as the Gallic race, would seem to be unconscious humour. Of all kinds of wit, none has so delicious a flavour as *naïveté*, which indeed is Nature's own, and therefore necessarily superior to the artificial productions of man. The famous offer of a Napoleon—sometimes attributed to the late Alexander Dumas—to contribute enough money to bury twenty lawyers, may be traced to the *naïve* utterance of a French provincial magnate, as recorded by Tallemant des Réaux. An "intendant" of Languedoc, whose wife had died at Béziers, desired that the province should pay the expense of her funeral. The good folk of Languedoc, however, objected that, if they were to agree, a precedent of a doubtful kind would thereby be created, not (they carefully instructed their deputies to remark) that they would refuse to bury M. l'Intendant; no, that they would do with pleasure; but, &c. The Irish bull may be considered as the Hibernian form of *naïveté* and a charming form it often assumes. When Ireland had her own Parliament, it was not always Curran, or Grattan, or Hamilton who must have furnished the greatest delight to the House, but such gentlemen as Boyle Roche, who once exclaimed, "Mr. Speaker, I would give the half of the constitution—nay, the whole of it—to preserve the remainder." This same child of Erin wrote from a country-seat where he was staying, to a friend in Dublin: "At this very moment, my dear —, I am writing with a sword in one hand and a pistol in the other." He was also heard to speak in the severest terms of "a certain anonymous writer named Junius." Denouncing his opponents in Parliament, he thus apostrophised them: "You are trying to raise a tempest, but I will nip it in the bud;" which reminds one of the English judge, "Prisoner at the bar, God gave you health and strength; instead of which you go about stealing cows." In truth, neither *naïveté*, nor wit, nor humour are the exclusive possessions of any one nationality; rather do they display touches of human feeling "which make the whole world kin."

On Turkish Ways and Turkish Women.

PART II.

IN trying to draw a comparison between Eastern and Western social customs, the first difference which strikes us is as to the court. Royal and noble ladies have played so important a part in our own national life that we can hardly conceive of a court which is not adorned by the presence of cultivated women. Where men only congregate round an Eastern monarch there can be nothing but frigid etiquette and a want of grace and brightness. To gain official importance is the one thought, the one aim of those about the sovereign; this leads to a cringing servility in the mode of saluting and in the whole demeanour, and to minute distinctions in etiquette most strictly prescribed for the observance of each grade of the Sultan's courtiers. I witnessed something of this at what was, I believe, (until it was lately revived by the present Sultan, Abdul Hamid), the last *Bi-aât*, open-air levee, or *baise-main*, held according to ancient custom. The *fête* to which I refer took place in honour of the Bairam festival at the old Seraglio Palace, on the 27th of January, 1868. The ceremony was an imposing though somewhat monotonous one, but so picturesque were the surroundings that we scarcely wearied of the long time of waiting which had to be endured in the raw morning air before the royal cortège arrived from the mosque, whither the Sultan had gone in state at daybreak. Under the shade of dark cypress-trees, on either side the avenue, stood lines of infantry regiments in new uniforms with the brightest of scarlet fezzes. Several privileged Europeans had obtained admission within the great gates of the outer enclosure, which were, for the rest, strictly guarded. These persons, gaily dressed, strayed on the green sward under the trees, or took up the most advantageous position for witnessing what was to follow. Chairs had been placed for our party on some raised stone-work surrounding an old oak, near the principal gateway, beneath the high over-hanging portico of which the Sultan, seated on his jewelled throne or chair of state, was to receive, in full gaze of the assembled Faithful and of the members of the different diplomatic bodies, the salutations of the various officers of state and of the head Imâms, or priests. Close to our left was the tent for the European Ambassadors, and amongst the soldiers stood the then little Prince Youssouff Izzeddin, in military uniform. During the hour of waiting the soldiers kept no strict discipline, but stood about in knots, jesting and laughing amongst themselves. Presently the music struck up, and the long procession of Pachas and Effendis, in uniforms covered with

glittering embroidery, began to advance up the avenue. Each Pacha was surrounded by a circle of his own attendants on foot, in varied dresses, whilst he himself was on horseback. The Pachas in official employ preceded the Sultan; the Princes of the Imperial family rode immediately in front of him, in the most brilliant uniforms of all, being resplendent with masses of gold embroidery. Abdul Aziz, plainly dressed in a dark blue surtout, wearing only the star of the order of the Osmanieh, was mounted on a magnificent silver-grey charger, caparisoned with jewelled silver harness and trappings. The Sultan's bearing was grave and sedate, not to say morose. His habit of keeping his chin depressed and his gaze immoveably fixed in front of him had a chilling effect. Without turning to right or left, he passed amidst the respectful silence of the crowd, straight under the gateway into the inner court, and there dismounting, remained invisible to the crowd whilst hasty preparations were made for his return. Meanwhile the soldiers were keeping back a crowd of rabble that had passed in on the entrance of the troops; the Pachas and high functionaries were taking up their places according to their respective ranks within the line of troops, and the Imâms were forming as a body by themselves in a part of the building opposite to us, ready to defile when their turn should come. Arrangements were now made marking distinctions to be observed in the way of approaching the royal presence. A long strip of crimson carpet was laid down in the avenue, defining the line along which the lesser dignitaries were to advance in front of the throne, whilst shorter strips were so placed as to make the space immediately in front of it resemble the stripes on a huge Union Jack. A carpet of cloth of gold was spread beneath the portico, and presently the throne or chair of state was carried out and placed on this. It appeared to me to be in the shape of a long, square-backed sofa, and to be of gold ornamented with precious stones. This chair of state was carefully covered with gold gauze until the Sultan approached, which he did amidst a flourish of trumpets, looking very glum and greatly bored. He took his seat as though that act indicated his right to sit as a sovereign whilst others must stand in his presence; but the moment the Grand Vizier, Fuad Pacha, advanced to offer his homage, the Sultan rose, and remained standing whilst the other great functionaries salaamed and passed behind the throne. Aali Pacha, Kiritli Mustapha Pacha (of Crete), Omar Pacha, Kiamil Pacha, Ruchdi Mehemet Pacha, &c., passed, and when the *Beylikjee-bache*, or Lord Chief Justice, had saluted, his Majesty sat down, as if the worst of the ceremony was over. All these had advanced at an angle of 45°; their salutations had been deep salaams, and they passed to the right, and kissed the gold fringe of a scarf fastened to the arm of the throne, and held under the hand of the *Mabeyingee-bache*, or Lord Chamberlain. As soon as presented the great officers took their places within the lines of soldiers to the Sultan's right. Others advanced along the short slip of carpet at right angles to the throne; these were, I believe, the Effendis, or Princes of the Royal

family, either nephews of the Sultan, or husbands of the Sultanas. As his Majesty kept his gaze fixed in front of him, he seemed to ignore these latter. The officers of the army now advanced, went through the usual ceremony, and took up their places to the Sultan's left, fronting the civil functionaries. Even the common soldiers advanced a certain distance, and not only salaamed, but went down on their knees, touching the forehead to the earth three times, and this they repeated at three different distances. Meanwhile Turkish and European airs were played very fairly, the band being led by a distinguished Italian, who is a Pacha.

Long before the soldiers had all salaamed, the priests, or Imâms, began to defile from the raised arched doorway opposite us. First came the Sheik-ul-Islam, or high priest, a grand old man, wearing a long white robe with a gold collar, and a white turban. He was followed by two suffragans in a similar dress. Then came a procession of priests walking two abreast; the first body of about thirty had long green robes and green turbans, this being the sacred colour worn only by those who can claim to be descendants of the Prophet; like bodies followed in brown, in violet, and in blue, many of these last having white turbans. The Sultan rose to receive the clergy, who were allowed to kiss his robe instead of the gold scarf. The Sheik-ul-Islam now made a short prayer, whilst all stood, holding the palms open and upward beside the face, which is the prescribed posture for offering thanksgiving. The ceremony was now over, and the Sultan rose and retired quickly. All the time this excessive homage had been rendered him, there had not been the slightest sign of answering courtesy in the face of his Majesty; intensely bored, he had remained stiff and stolid till the last salaam had been made him, with the one exception that he turned away his face with marked displeasure at the approach of those who were in disgrace. The ceremony had lasted only about an hour and a quarter, and all remained still and silent, until his Majesty had retired in the same state as he had come, on his magnificent charger, the throne having been immediately covered and removed.

Eastern squalor and grandeur met that day side by side. Although we had been admitted by special tickets, the rabble, as I said, had contrived to get in, and barefooted, ragged urchins were clinging to the branches of the trees like so many sloths, in full view of the royal gaze. I was told that the one thing in Europe which struck the Sultan more than anything else was the fact that everybody there seemed neatly shod, and he seemed to think this an evidence of the triumph of good government! Not that his own people go barefoot, but that the poor were miserably down at heel in a literal as well as a metaphorical sense.

The court etiquette I have here described is repeated in its measure in every great household, as each chief officer of state holds his little court in the same manner in an ever-recurring cycle. The ladies also hold parallel receptions, and on this occasion the kadens of the Seraglios and the khanums of all the great houses had been astir before daybreak,

as every one should be ready and in court dress by the moment the booming of the cannon announces the dawn. Ceremonious visits then commence with the chief lady, and the greeting exchanged is a hearty phrase, "*Bâîram size moubarak olsun !*" (May Bâîram blessings descend on you!) These visits are interrupted to permit of the ladies endeavouring to catch a glimpse of the Sultan's procession as he goes to mosque, for this is the utmost share allowed them in the proceedings of the day, as no Mussulman woman is permitted to be present at the ceremony of the *baise-main*. Wives of Pachas will wait for hours in their carriages drawn up by the side of the pavement and jammed in by a dense crowd of a most motley description: Persians, with their dull blue skirt-like coats, and high purple brimless hats; mountebanks in sheepskins; peasants with dancing bears; Greeks, Syrians, and Arnâouts; but more than all are their eyes attracted to the lines of Circassian soldiers, where many a lady who was once a slave hopes to find the face of a brother or lover from whom she was parted years ago—and they do not always look in vain.

Besides the Bâîram festival, there are other special occasions which demand an exchange of the amenities of civilised life. Such are the anniversary of the Sultan's accession, which is always honoured by a general illumination and by visits of congratulation; the royal birthday, which demands nearly as great demonstrations; all religious festivals which require that congratulations should be expressed, as the Courban Bâîram, corresponding to our Easter Day, or rather to the Jewish Passover, which is really the feast of sacrifice the Koran prescribes to be kept in commemoration of Abraham's intended offering of Ishmael; the Barrât Gedjah, or Night of Destiny; and the Muharrem Ghün, or New Year's Day. These festivals require that visits of great ceremony should be paid in due order, and the *fête* days are often spent in this way, every palace and large house being filled with crowds of gaily-dressed people who pass in and out continually on their friendly errands. The elevation of a Bey to the rank of Pacha, or the appointment of a Pacha to a place in the Ministry,—a birthday, circumcision, or marriage *fête*, also call for ceremonious visits from friends, which must be paid not only to the master but to the mistress of the house. Yet how can this be, it may be asked, where strict etiquette almost demands that one Pacha should tacitly ignore the existence of another Pacha's wives and daughters. This is one of the anomalies of Turkish life. It is sometimes considered requisite that the visit of the Pacha and his chief wife should be so timed that whilst the khanums are seated on their divan, side by side, smoking the pipe of peaceful intentions and uttering low sentences expressive of good wishes, in which the words "*Moubarak olsun !*" (May all be well!) constantly recur at each deep wave of the hand in token of salaams, the chief eunuch should arrive from the Salaamlık as the bearer of a string of compliments from the husband of the visitor, which he utters with much respectful emphasis in the presence of the wife, who thereupon reiterates her lord's courteous greetings. This is the only approach to

an exchange of intercourse permitted between a married lady and her husband's friend.

In Europe social life is diversified by court receptions, the opera, the theatre, balls, dinner-parties, garden-parties, rides and drives, walks, shopping, church-going, and foreign travel. All these have their counterpart more or less true or grotesque in Turkey. Take first court receptions. These, it is true, are rare, but they are very magnificent when they do occur. The grandest was that held in 1868 at the *fête* of the circumcision of Youssouff Izzeddin Effendi. As this was a public occasion, answering to our court drawing-rooms, the wives and daughters of all the great Pachas were obliged to present their congratulations in person to his Majesty; and, the strictest rule of all Turkish etiquette being for the time superseded by another even more stringent, no woman, whatever her rank, dare veil her face in the presence of the Commander of the Faithful.

I leave it to the imagination of those ladies who have undergone the ordeal of preparing a train and a curtsy for our own court, what anxious cares were bestowed on ugly green and garnet-coloured satin gowns, puffed pantaloons to match, on huge wadded paletots worn over the dress, and on French satin shoes. But, above all, the head-dress was the most difficult to arrange, many of the ladies having short-cropped hair. Everything depends on the set of the *hôtose* or *coiffure* of coloured silk gauze, and on the blaze of jewels fixed to it; crescents of diamonds, aigrettes of diamonds, sapphires, and rubies, pearls almost the size of strawberries, pear-shaped diamond earrings as large as hazel-nuts, or coronets resembling old-fashioned imperial crowns. Moreover, the head-dress must be most firmly attached, for, as with us, a court *débutante* has to exercise herself in the most graceful manner of bending low before royalty, there a lady has to practise how she may best advance demurely with a long square train passed *between* her feet, drop suddenly on her knees, dip her forehead three times to the ground, kiss the hem of the august personage's *keurk*, or furred robe, if that happens to be worn at the time—and, after all this, retreat with good grace, and without losing her jewelled cap at the feet of her imperial sovereign. Some of the younger married ladies were courageous enough to adopt the European corsage combined with Turkish train and trousers; but the most ambitious of all were three young khanums who appeared in white court dresses made in faultless Parisian style, trimmed with wreaths of white roses gemmed with dew, and very simple coiffures to match. These youthful princesses looked altogether lovely, and when they advanced up the crowded presence-chamber they excited murmurs of admiration; they also saluted the Sultan by a deep curtsy only, he standing; but on passing to where the Validé Soultan was seated near her son, they made to her the customary acknowledgments. His Majesty was evidently much charmed by the grace and dignity of the sisters, and showed them marked attention by insisting that they should be seated—a sign of condescension and respect not extended to any other lady present. The

Validé humoured her son's whim, saying to the eldest of the young princesses, whilst patting her on the shoulder and motioning her to be seated on the low cushions beside her, "*Ghel, kiss'm, ghel! K'hosh gueldiniz, safa gueldiniz! Buyuruniz otouriniz!*" (Come, my child, come! Be welcome. Sit beside me.)

The effect of these exquisite toilettes on the taste of the Turkish kadens soon became apparent—they aimed at imitating French *modes* more than ever. Now to dress after the fashion of European women is tacitly to break the law of the land. Indeed, from time to time by-laws would be issued by the Zaptieh Pacha, or head of the police, reminding the khanums that this was the case. How these mandates became known I cannot say, but the ladies would at times become fully aware "that it was prohibited to Mussulman women to imitate the Franks in the matter of dress," and very indignant did the interference make them. Such prohibitions would for a time check the influx of European fashions, but soon again the fair defaulter would return to some innovation in the way of a tight bodice *alla franca*, which they would hide when prudence demanded under the feridgee, or loose square-cut cloak, which is always worn out of doors. Often have I heard Turkish ladies, when preparing for the *promenade en voiture* (their chief distraction) discuss anxiously which of all their beautiful *fustans* they dared to put on, exclaiming, "I shall wear this! *this* is not too much *à la franque*; besides, the zaptiehs would not dare to stop my carriage if they did see: so I shall wear it." And only the timid ones remained faithful to the straight costume regulated by law.

But all did not escape the vigilance of the police. I must here narrate a very sad incident, told me as perfectly true, which occurred to two attractive young Turkish ladies, the daughters of a man of position. I had met them but a short time before, and lunched with them. These sisters were pretty, fond of dress, but gentle modest girls, and their one fault was that they preferred Frank fashions to Turkish. In a season when it so happened that the Zaptieh Pacha chanced to be more fanatically disposed than usual with regard to the emancipation going on as to dress, an order was promulgated among the police of Stamboul that they had full liberty to stop any carriage in which the ladies were suspected of being in Frank costume, and to demand that the feridgee should be thrown open, and the robe shown. If the dress were found to be made with the tight waist, *alla franca*, the zaptieh might then pour forth volleys of insolent abuse on the head of the offending khanum, and might proceed to tear her yashmak and feridgee as a punishment for neglecting to obey the commands of the head of the police. The common zaptiehs are a brutal set, full of insolent swagger and self-importance. Imagine wretches of this sort assaulting two girls of refined nature, who believed their social position secured them from public outrage. In the chief street of the public bazaar of Stamboul, crowded as it was on a Friday with sight-seers and idle loungers, these low zaptiehs stopped

the carriage of the two young ladies I have spoken of—tore their dress and their veils, called them by the coarsest epithets, attracted a noisy and motley crowd—Turks, Greeks, Armenians—and at last allowed the carriage to proceed, the ladies striving to hide their tear-stained faces from the hooting rabble that followed. How deep an insult is the tearing of the veil those can estimate who know something of Eastern customs. The result of the outrage was, as I said, most sad. One of the sisters, a young wife, was in very delicate health; the shock in her case proved too much; she passed from one fainting fit to another; a serious illness followed, which ended in the loss of her life.

In speaking of the Validé Soultan, I called her bigoted as to the adoption of Frank customs. She was also exceedingly exclusive even in her own circle. I was once present at the marriage of a *Khanum Soultan*, or niece of the Sultan, Abdul Aziz. In this ceremony the Validé Soultan took part. As the head of the family on the female side, she sat in state at the top of the long *sofa* (or central reception saloon), and there, to the sound of music and singing, the bride was conducted in the presence of all the princesses of the imperial family to kiss the hem of the Validé's robe, as a sign of submissive reverence and gratitude on having an establishment given her. It is a fact that moveable wooden screens of trellis-work were placed round the saloon, so as to shut off an oval space in the centre, in order to hide the Validé's sacred person from the evil eye of any *giaour* who might by chance have obtained admission amongst the crowds of *khanums* who come and go and have the *entrée* to a wedding according to Turkish etiquette. Not even a glimpse of the Validé's face was vouchsafed me, although I was a privileged guest; and all I saw of her was the blaze of jewels on her stomacher glittering through the trellis-work. After the young bridegroom had also been conducted to pay the same homage as his bride, the Validé retired to a boudoir set apart for her use, and shortly afterwards withdrew from the wedding festivities, music and singing preceding her to the door of exit, while her attendants flung small silver coins by handfuls among the crowds in the saloons and passages. When she had left, ease succeeded restraint, and the four or five sultanas who remained to do the honours, rallied round the young bride, a very timid girl, only seventeen, who sat in an apartment decorated with black and silver, which struck me as funereal rather than bridelike. These sultanas, to each of whom I was presented in turn, were the sisters of Murad V. and of Abdul Hamid. The princesses were affable to me, and appeared amiable women, but they have a painfully timid manner, which is partly constitutional, and is also, in a great measure, owing to the seclusion in which they have been forced to live.

One fashion set by the Sultan and his mother was much followed by all the Pachas of official rank. Both were fond of building *Tchifliks*, or fancy farm-houses, where they could, when oppressed by the ceremonies and routine of court life, snatch a day's quiet and recreation in compara-

tive tranquillity. For I must note in passing, that in the ordinary daily life of a Sultan, every action is burdened by ceremony—even going to the bath is a fatiguing ceremonial. Perhaps this was the reason why Abdul Aziz, when once there, sometimes passed twelve whole days without leaving the suite of apartments belonging to the *hamum*, or bath. It was reported that he sought this seclusion when fits of ill-temper, amounting almost to madness, seized him—though if he did it to escape ceremony, one would take it to be rather an evidence of sanity. His favourite *tchiflik* was at Allem Dagh, a name meaning “the Mountain of my God.” It can be reached either from Scutari or from the Sweet Waters of Asia. It was from the miniature white marble kiosk, unique of its kind, which marks the latter spot, that the late Abdul Aziz started in state with the Empress Eugénie and her suite to make an excursion to this *tchiflik*. The imperial lady was detained that day by a reception she gave to Turkish ladies of high rank; and whilst awaiting her arrival, the Grand Turk, forgetful of all dignity, his face flattened against the glass of the centre window of the kiosk, remained eagerly straining his sight towards the Palace of Beylerbey whence she was expected. Deep green valleys and broad heaths, rich with chrome yellow and red loam soils, bordered the road, till their Majesties reached the small village of Allem Dagh, consisting of a few poor wooden houses; but leaving these on one side, they drove to the “farm-house,” which is rather a country-house, filled with a good deal of rich furniture, satin hangings, &c. I believe there was once a ménagerie here, but it is now at the *Ghuthana* (place of roses), near the old Seraglio. A large building, beautifully kept, is set apart for the sole use and benefit of thousands of pigeons of every hue and variety of plumage; for the pigeon is a sacred bird with the Turks, being revered as the dove which brought the olive-branch to Noah, and hundreds of these birds are to be found round every mosque, where they are fed at the public expense.

Allem Dagh is famous for a natural source of water, most pure and invigorating. It is a favourite spot for a picnic once or twice in the summer, when the more adventurous of European residents summon courage for the long ride, in a hot sun, over sandy heath covered with tangled grass and bushes of purple-headed wild lavender; but it lies too far from civilised dwellings to make it exactly safe to repeat one's visits too often, lest banditti might hear of one's coming and be prepared. Very few casual visitors to Constantinople have penetrated so far as Allem Dagh, I imagine, nor have I seen a description of it in any book. When I first saw the source, it was nearly in its natural state, flowing out from beneath a rough slab bearing an inscription, and, falling into a rude basin formed by rock and soil, the stream lost itself far down in the valley below, where its refreshing waters were wasted on the tangled vegetation which it made wildly luxuriant. How often in the burning summer-time, when the inhabitants of Pera, on the opposite European side, could hardly obtain water fit to drink from the *soujees*, who carry

it about in little barrels for sale—when, in case of a fire, there was no water at hand—how often have I thought of the refreshing stream at Allem Dag, and wished it could be utilised by being brought to Scutari by bends, in the same way as water is conveyed to Pera from the village of Belgrade, near Therapia. It is, perhaps, considered too sacred a stream to be used for ordinary purposes.

Let me now describe a very delightful excursion I made in the spring of 1868, passing a whole week in a *tchiflik* situated among the Asian hills, within an easy ride of Beicos. The "farm"-house was built on the model of a Swiss *châlet*, the *kaffès* to the windows and dome of its Turkish bath alone adding characteristic features as an Eastern domicile. It had only just been completed, and had a bright, cheerful appearance, contrasting with the half-rotten, black wooden structures of the houses in the village, which were not numerous, and inhabited only by small farmers and labourers. All the surroundings of the *tchiflik* looked busy and prosperous. Men were raking and hoeing in the long narrow garden in the front of which the house stood, with a small grass-plot and carriage-drive before it; the rest of the garden ground was divided into square beds, where neat rows of vegetables of many sorts were beginning to disclose their varied greens in unsullied brightness. A broad mountain stream came tumbling and brawling in a foaming mass just outside the garden on the left. On the right, sandy hills were daily being cleared of heath and brushwood, and planted with young fruit-trees. Green hills, covered with sheep and buffaloes at pasture, formed a near background to the picture, and up above, what space was left for sky was of a soft, serene blue.

Our party numbered about fifty, forty of whom belonged to the hareem, and completely filled the *châlet*, the gentlemen having lodgings in the village, and leaving the *tchiflik* to the guardianship of a strong party of eunuchs and to Arnâout guards (Albanians), who are said to belong to gangs of robbers whom they keep in check for the sake of the subsidy they receive as the price of their escort. Fortunately we had lovely weather during our stay, for our six or eight rooms were overcrowded at night when the Eastern bedding literally covered all available floor space, and looked like so many mounds of graves side by side. In the daytime we were all eager to be up and out as much as possible. With the first beams of daylight we were astir and clamorous for whatever we could obtain in the way of food from the still sleepy eunuchs. Slices of coarse bread, goat-cheese and olives, with milk or coffee, formed our first meal, and then I, in a riding habit, and the Turkish ladies and slaves in *yeldemas*, or plain white calico dresses drawn over their coloured fustans, would sally forth to wander on the heights, gather wild flowers, and delight ourselves to our hearts' content with an unwonted sense of freedom and of a common enjoyment in the beauties of nature which few of the women had ever felt.

I had gone out one morning before the sun had actually risen, and

whilst the shafts of jasper rays were only beginning to flood the grand over-arching dome of sky behind the shady hills that enclosed the village. Coming suddenly on a most picturesque nook, I stood still, overpowered by a home-sick longing. "Oh! to be in England, now that April's here," came involuntarily to my lips as a "thing of beauty" in a rough place woke up old memories; it was merely a branch of a young cherry-tree weighed down with its wealth of large snow-white blossoms gleaming like pearl crystals in a light as yet untinted by the gold of the rising sun, but it stirred me with a mighty power.

"Is it like Ingelterra, Cocona dear?" said a voice at my side, in a foreign accent, and somebody linked the taper fingers of two pretty hands across my arm.

I turned to look into a very sweet, ingenuous face, pale and delicate, but half hidden by a snowy yashmak which only made the hazel eyes more tenderly luminous.

"The cherry blossom—look, Indjie,* that is like England," I answered, "but not the hills nor the trees nor the houses, unless it is Pacha Effendi's tchiflik, and that is a copy of a Swiss châlet, which is not English, as you know."

"Look, I put pink flowers in my hôtose, but I now throw them away," said Indjie, suiting the action to the word. "I will take the cherry flowers and give you some and keep some, and make me look like a bride;" and Indjie blushed and laughed, and leant over to reach the white sprays.

But the young fruit-tree stood far back from the wooden fence that enclosed the garden of a tumble-down Turkish cottage, its delicate blossoms trailed on the dull blue-green acanthus-like leaves of a bed of artichokes, heavy yet with the morning dew, and, tempting as they were, we could not reach them. Giving up the vain effort, we leant against the fence and chatted.

"Why do you want to make yourself look like a bride to-day, Indjie?" I questioned; "is it you that they have chosen as a bride for Rechid Effendi? I know that he has asked the Pacha to give him an establishment."

Indjie was rosy and confused by this time, pulling ruthlessly at the leaves that grew through the paling.

"Oh no! Cocona dear! Rechid Effendi not think any more of me. He quite forget old childlike days when we played together and go to school together. I not think of him."

But Indjie ended with some despire, and there were tears in the soft eyes.

"Oh, I am afraid you have not forgotten him, Indjie!" I exclaimed, "and you will be unhappy if they give him another wife. Who is it that he is to have?"

"Ayesha Khanum not tell me, but Rechid Effendi come every day

* Pearl.

to Lollah Beshire's room and call her and talk, talk all times. Then Ayesha Khanum go talk to Buyuk Khanum Effendi till five o'clock, six o'clock (near midnight) and send me away to get cigara. Truly I not know."

"Perhaps, then, Indjie dear, you *may* be chosen," I said, to comfort her. "Don't be sorry; you will soon know."

"I think Khanum Effendi not give me; she like me to give her cigara and chibouk. I always her little girl from that high time," holding out her hand a yard from the ground; "how she give me away from her?"

"Oh yes! Indjie, she would. She is kind-hearted if she is passionate, and Buyuk Khanum would like to see you happy."

"Ah! you not know all!" said Indjie; "Great Khanum always keep me at her side. She very afraid."

"What can you mean? Surely she is not jealous about Pacha Effendi?"

Indjie looked about to see no one was near, and then answered in a very low voice, "Pacha wants to buy me for five hundred lira. Khanum Effendi say NO. I not want to be Pacha's girl. He asked now three times. Three times I say no."

Here was a revelation indeed! This quiet, gentle girl, who had been under my eyes for days had been going through a trial such as no woman in our land can be called on to suffer, and had never betrayed her trouble and anxiety even to her best friend. She knew she could trust me, but she had not made me her *confidante* hitherto. I had certainly heard by a side wind that Buyuk Khanum had been in some perplexity and in a state of constant ill-temper for more than a fortnight before we took our holiday to the country; and Indjie's story had thrown a light on the reason of our coming,—the Buyuk Khanum was to be propitiated, and her husband would propose his mercenary bargain once more when she was in a better mood.

"I very sorry," said Indjie. "I do nothing against Khanum Effendi. I always very good girl: you know."

I did know; and I began to think and to pity Indjie from the bottom of my heart. There were complications in the whole business which made it difficult to predict how the matter would end.

"Only keep up a good heart, Indjie," I counselled, "and never go out of Khanum Effendi's sight. Then all will be well."

At this point in our conversation the door of the little cottage was swung suddenly open, and a tall, manly, brisk person stepped into the garden, and seeing us stopped short. He was about six-and-twenty, bronzed, with thick dark hair cut short and just showing under his fez; dark eyes and a frank smile.

"Sabah sherif haîr oulsainiz!" (Good morning to you!) was his unabashed salutation, while the colour nevertheless mounted to his sun-burnt cheeks at the unexpected rencontre. "Are you going to ride so early?" he continued. "I was going to look after the horses."

"You may gather me first the white flower, Rechid Effendi," I said. "We could not reach it, and Indjie Calpha *particularly* wants it."

"*Moullakar istior!*" (Special wants!) repeated the young man, gathering the blossoms and presenting them. "Why?"

"That I will tell you at another time, Effendi," I said. "Only Indjie Calpha is very English in her ways."

The young man looked puzzled as we went on our way towards the *tchiflik* with our spoils, leaving him to attend to a string of *begherjees* (horse-drivers) who at the moment came up the lane to be hired.

My friend, half-pleased, half-vexed, hurried home to pin her precious blossoms in her *hôtose*, so that they might be as becoming as possible, and I followed to accompany her.

Rechid Effendi was the *Kiatib* or secretary of the Pacha. He had grown up in the household, and had made his way by sheer force of merit. At this time he happened to be one of the few marriageable young men belonging to the establishment, and I knew that he had petitioned the Khanum Effendi to spare him a wife from amongst some of her Calphas. Knowing very well that he had been an old playmate of Indjie Calpha's, I quite understood that his hope in making the appeal just then had been to save the young girl from the fate the Pacha offered her. It remained to be seen if the wife had comprehended the opportunity. This seemed self-evident, yet why had so great a delay been permitted in making the decision? Ayesha Khanum was reticent, and seemed to be playing a double game. Would she favour the Pacha's views or those of the wife? No one could tell which might be most to her own interest, and perhaps she was not clear on the point herself. At all events she took no decided part, but nearly worried herself to death with trotting between the harem and the lollah's room where she held her audiences. Negotiations seemed to be in abeyance at the time of our visit to the *tchiflik*, and the old woman busied herself with more substantial matters than love-making, for she had to cater for very hungry people, and to make provision for continual picnics. To-day was one of her busiest days, as our cavalcade was to start early for the Giant's Mountain, a famous spot not far inland from the junction of the waters of the Bosphorus and Black Sea.

It was amusing enough to watch the scene on the grass-plot before the house, where the women were mounting the rough country ponies. There was nothing for it but to sit astride on the high red-velvet saddles, and they professed great envy at the easy seat I possessed on the side-saddle I had had the forethought to bring. The *yeldema*, indeed, made it no easy matter to sit on horseback either with or without a pommel, and the Turkish ladies felt the seat so insecure that they declared loudly they had not the courage to move unless footmen ran by their side ready to catch them if there were the least danger. This promise was assented to from the *salaamlık*, and all the old retainers about the person of the Pacha were pressed, not unwillingly, into the day's especial service. These men were many of them married to some of the old Calphas, and the ladies started a running conversation on their home news as they approached

near enough to hold up the great fringed umbrella taken as much for show as for shade. It was a pretty sight, indeed, to watch the long cavalcade as it wound in and out amongst the spring foliage, following the winding course of the narrow foot-paths that led up the mountain sides. The Pacha, with his more immediate attendants, rode some little way ahead of the women, and the armed Arnâout, in his picturesque dress, his girdle stuck full of weapons, and an old blunderbuss dangling in his hand, was the leader of the party. Then came the Buyuk Khanum on a fine white pony with scarlet trappings, with one man to lead the animal, two to hold her on, and eunuchs in attendance. So followed the Ortanjî Khanum and the three younger khanums, and then a long string of Calphas and Ninas, many of whom had no attendants but the begherjees, or horsekeepers. Here you saw the singing girls hopelessly struggling with a refractory brute that would not be induced to cross a stream, there you saw a pack-saddle turn under the animal it belonged to; now a rein had broken and was past mending, here fallen trees brought the line to a standstill.

Alhamdu lillah ! At last we all reach the platform top of the Giant's Mountain, hot, out of breath, thirsty, and quite ready for the savoury roast lambs preparing for us on one side under the trees. Mats were spread for the tired girls, carpets for the Pacha and his wives, and, from the Imâm's house, sheets and coloured hangings were brought and fastened round an enclosed space to form a division between the women and the men. There was plenty to talk of whilst resting, and the scene around offered a feast to the eyes. But a more prosaic feast had first to be despatched gratefully, little favourite dishes being passed under the curtain as presents from the gentlemen's table to the ladies', and *vice versa*. We then dispersed to place our carpets opposite some favourite view. Wood and water, green spring foliage, and mirrored sky or silver surfaces, lay stretched at our feet. Or, if you lay back in some thyme-carpeted nook, you might lose yourself in the wide expanse of pure blue sky in watching the outstretched wings of four or five eagles, seen far above like larks, which the eye seeks almost in vain, whilst nearer, kites whirled above our heads, watching for the remains of our repast.

In such a nook an important confidence was made me. It was not Indjie who had been chosen for Rechid Effendi, but a certain Pembé * Calpha, whose much longer service in the house entitled her to the first chance of an establishment. This girl was all very well, but she was older than the young man, of a remarkably quiet, indifferent disposition, and not at all suited to him. I was a good deal disappointed; not so Indjie; the news did not seem as yet to have reached her, and she appeared occupied only with the opportunities that day had offered of seeing and exchanging a few sentences with the Effendi, who, for his part, had been devoting himself to the service of the Buyuk Khanum, with, I thought, very politic views. I hoped all might yet go well.

* Pink or rosy.

But we had a great deal to see besides the view. There is a mosque and a *turbeh*, or mausoleum, on the summit of the Giant's Mountain. The mosque had been thrown open for the use of those who wished to perform their devotions, and whilst the more devout were thus occupied, I and another European lady were taken by some of the gentlemen of our party to the top of the minaret, from whence the view is magnificent. Far to the North lay the Black Sea, with a grave tinting even under that bright sun; below us were the forts of Kavak, marking the entrance of the Straits. On the other side, the Bosphorus wound in and out like a thread of silver, up to the point where Stamboul lay in a golden haze, with the Marmora beyond. Opposite us were the hills of Europe—Therapia, Buyukdere, Yenimahale, whose palaces and pretty kiosks looked like the diminutive dwellings of Lilliputian land.

Off to the east lay the wide expanse of wood stretching away to the Asian continent—hill behind hill in graceful curves, bluer and fainter till they merged into the sky-line. Immediately below us stretched the Sultan's Valley, one broad new roadway marking its course, and troops belonging to the barracks at Unkiar-Iskellessi were being drilled there. Lifted up as it were into the sky on the minaret of a mosque, itself on the summit of the Giant's Mountain, the scene was magnificent, and I did not easily tire of this splendid view, but the tomb, or *turbeh*, had yet to be seen. There was some demur about my being permitted to enter, but when I entreated permission in Turkish, and showed brand-new light boots, it was easily granted. Here, within a neat enclosure, walled in, was a tomb, or rather grave, some nine or ten feet long, and five or six in breadth. My companions assured me it contains the *leg* only of the prophet Elijah, whom they call Ooshâ, and account a giant, and the impress of whose step is said to be still visible on the flattened summits of some of the surrounding hills. Around the grave and under the walls were many rose-bushes, perfectly covered with shreds of coloured and white rags, which devotees tie on the twigs when making their *nezz*, or vows, for they believe that any wish made on this sacred spot is certain of fulfilment. Indjie Calpha and I, each religiously made our wish, and tied a strip of fine white muslin on the bushes. Whether our requests were granted I must not tell in this place.

Elijah is believed to have inherited a supernatural existence, having drunk of the water of life. He is thought to have been the *Chkooth*, or invisible beneficent spirit of his time, who appears to all good Moslems in their times of perplexity.* It is to be hoped our pilgrimage went far to secure decision in the matter which so many of our party felt perplexing. Pembé Calpha, indifferent as she seemed, no doubt made her *nezz* as hopefully as did Indjie. To others also this spot was sacred ground; I have no doubt they repeated here the *fatieh*, or opening chapter of the Koran, passing their hands devoutly over the face, concluding their whispered prayer with the words:—"Extol the per-

* See *The Dervishes, or Oriental Spiritualism*, by J. P. Browne, p. 271.

fection of thy Lord—the Lord of Might—exempting Him from that which they (the unbelievers) ascribe to Him (viz. the having a Son or partaker of His Godhead): and peace be on the Apostles, and praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures. O God, I have transferred the merit of what I have recited from the excellent Koran to the Prophet to whom this place is dedicated. O God! I adjure thee by the Prophet, and by him to whom this place is dedicated, to grant me my request.” Probably several of our party took home amulets which the Imâm had written for them, and which are designed to protect them from threatened dangers. We all seemed to have enough to do and to see before we each deposited our few coins in the metal plate which is devoted to offerings for the poor. At last we were all once more in the saddle, and slowly descending the stony path. Some of the ladies were very timid during the descent, but arrived on the broad new road in the Sultan’s Valley, they became more courageous and determined to try the mettle of the horses. This was the cause of an accident which might have been serious. The Buyuk Khanum was run away with, and thrown to the ground heavily. There was an ugly wound in the head, and some loss of blood. Of course I was at once called on to act hakim, and by good chance was able to put my patient into an *araba*, or heavy-looking wagon of carved oak, which happened to be passing. We arrived home quite tired out, after a most delightful day, the younger khanums bent on going out next time in a Frank riding-habit and on a side-saddle.

“Cocona dear, you will teach us to ride as you do, will you not?” they said, beseechingly. And I longed to do so, but I saw, alas, too many obstacles in the way of such bold defiance of Mussulman customs. Every morning of our stay, the poor, lean, long-necked *beghirs*, rough, untrained pack-ponies, were driven early to be hired, and every day brought us some pleasant excursion in the neighbourhood. There were still two or three chance meetings for Indjie and Rechid, while Pembé and Indjie (who had become great friends) were frequently to be seen looking through the kaffés into the court-yard of the salaamlik when the Effendi happened to be there. How much of this he knew I could not guess, but he most prudently kept his gaze turned from the windows, and was evidently making steps in the Buyuk Khanum’s good graces. As to the Pacha, he was more amiable and jovial than usual, and seemed to ignore what was a source of anxiety to many of our party.

Now the sort of holiday life I have sketched during this visit was unusual, I must admit, for the neighbourhood of Stamboul. At Broussa, a favourite Oriental watering-place, lying just below the snow-capped Mount Olympus, it might, I suppose, be repeated over and over again. Much, however, depends on the season of the year. Our holiday was in honour of the Muharrem, or New Year, which is a time of great rejoicings, and has many curious customs peculiar to itself.

F. E. A.

30.

Carità.

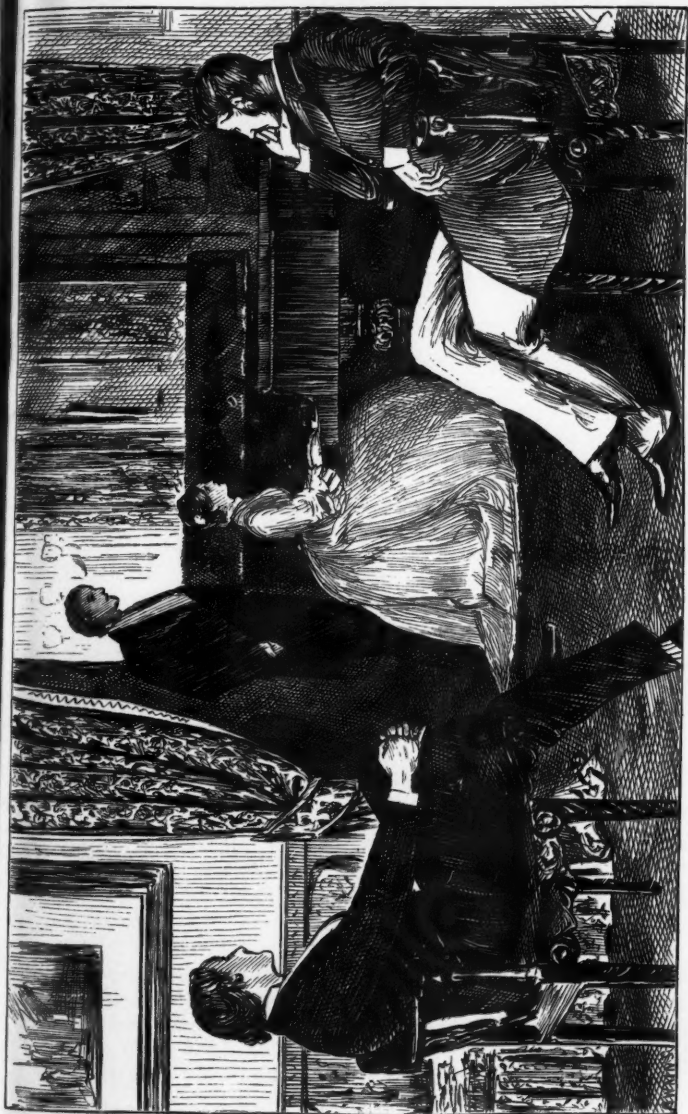
CHAPTER XVI.

SUNDAY EVENING.



O sit down in your morning clothes, painfully conscious of a blue tie with a pin in it, at a decorous dinner-table with three men in correct evening dress, and two ladies—not indeed bare-shouldered according to ancient use, but yet arrayed in all the niceties of that demi-toilette which is the despair of the vulgar—is in itself no small trial to a sensitive and thin-skinned youth. Roger Burchell had not been able to resist the spell which Mrs. Meredith exercised upon everybody who came near her, nor had he been able to count the cost of that evening spent in Cara's society, and to strike a balance between the pain it would cause him and the pleasure to be procured from it. He was not calm enough to do this. He had not thought of any pain involved, but snatched at

the chance of carrying out his hopes and spending the evening in her society without thinking of any results. To be sure, instinctive dislike and repugnance had moved him at the first sight of the two young men. What did they want here? What had Cara to do with them? But that was all; and he had not realised how hard it would be to sit by and see these natural enemies so much nearer and more intimate with Cara than himself, linked to her by ties even of older friendship than he could boast of, poor fellow. All this was unthought-of misery. It was true that after the Merediths went away in the short interval before dinner he had half-an-hour with Cara by herself—but she asked him questions about his aunt and about his little sisters, showing no interest in himself, and at last begged him to excuse her, as she must get ready for dinner. Even then he did not know how dark his fate was to be; but he could not get ready for dinner. He looked at himself in the glass, and at his blue tie which he had thought so



"ANGELS EVER BRIGHT AND FAIR," SHE SANG.

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well of in the morning. The best that any one could say for poor Roger was that he looked like a respectable mechanic in his Sunday costume, and a consciousness of this fact impressed itself upon his own mind for the first time. Yes—the long glass in the glimmering half-lighted drawing-room showed him his own image as no glass at home had ever done—like an engineer in his Sunday clothes, one of his practical “mates” in the workshop, who showed him how to make boilers and screws, and asked him for beer—exactly like one of them. While this latter thought was in his mind Cara came softly into the room in her white dress, the most perfect dainty creature, tearing poor Roger’s heart in two. How unlike she was to himself in his blue tie! he felt as if he could never leave her, and yet wished himself with his aunt in Notting Hill; for what had he to do here?

The dinner was not, perhaps, the abundant meal which Roger had been used to see on occasions when there was company. There was no huge joint, no pair of visible fowls, with a tongue placed between them, which was his mother’s grand dish, but a succession of small matters handed round, which Roger tried to despise. He tried hard to despise everything—the over-dress (as he felt it to be), the flowers on the dainty table, the ready flow of talk. How could these fellows find so much to say? He could have talked to Cara (perhaps) had they been alone together: but to chatter as these fellows did—he could as soon fly, he said to himself. There were no decorous silences, no long pauses, such as he had been used to, but a constant, easy flow of this, which, no doubt, they called conversation! It could not be said that he himself added much to it. Now and then, after considerable pondering, he would fire off a remark, but this seldom happened till after the subject had been dismissed by the others, and when it required a polite effort on their parts to make out what he meant; and he discovered this with a hot blush of shame as soon as his little speech was made. The only comfort he had was that Cara did not talk very much either: but then she listened with pleased looks while the Meredith family chattered. How they all chattered, mother and sons! Roger did not think they could be quite—he did not know what word to use—not quite—. Perfectly respectable people did not, so far as he knew, indulge in such streams of conversation. He felt there was something wrong in so much talk.

And when they went upstairs after dinner it was still worse. Mr. Beresford and the others did not sit over their wine, which Roger would have thought the best thing possible had he found themselves satisfactory; but as this was not the case, and he was sure that the only object of the young Merediths in not staying below and drinking themselves stupid was anxiety to be with Cara too, he took their quick move as another sign of depravity. It was new-fashioned, it was un-English, it was almost wicked. He followed upstairs with a protest in his soul. Cara and Mrs. Meredith were sitting together over the fire. They drew a little apart as the others came in, and Mr. Beresford placed himself by the elder lady, and Oswald

by Cara. So! Roger said to himself, that was the habitual way in which they arranged themselves—nothing could be more clear; flirtation, nothing but flirtation, between the old people and between the young people. It was more than wrong, it was monstrous. He supposed such things did happen in London society, where everything that was bad happened; but to think of poor little, innocent Cara being thrown into the midst of such a set of people! Roger could scarcely command his feelings. After standing about behind-backs for a time with Edward, who, to tell the truth, seemed a little "out of it" too, Roger's sense of horror forced him forward to the front of the fire, where he suddenly placed himself with that temerity of enraged shyness which is bolder than assurance. At all events, there could be no particular conversation between Oswald and Cara while he stood there.

This made a little break in the low-voiced talk. Mrs. Meredith, who sat on the other side in a low chair, with a little table by her elbow, on which stood a lamp, turned from Mr. Beresford to look at him. He could not easily think ill of this soft-smiling lady; but he made an effort, and succeeded even in this.

"Are you at the University, Mr. Burchell?" she said, smiling upon him.

There was some work lying upon her little table. He jumped at this evidence of Sabbath-breaking and profanity with inward satisfaction as a sign that she must be bad too.

"No," he said, with unnecessary exp'inatoriness, "I am not so lucky. I have got my own way to make in the world. I have to start work at once. I was afraid you would give me credit for more than I deserved. My brother's at Cambridge, for he is going into the Church; but as for me, I've got my own way to make in the world."

"So have the rest of us," said Oswald. "You must not take such high ground of superiority. We have all got our own way to make in the world."

"That is all very well," said Roger, determined to separate himself from all resemblance to his companions; "but I'm a rough, practical man, not in your elegant way. I'm an engineer—I am going to India, I suppose——"

"And so, I suppose, am I," said Edward, looking, as Roger thought, towards Cara with a sigh. "But I am not very fond of the idea. I hope you like it better than I do?"

"Nobody will ask my opinion whether I like it or not," said Roger. He caught a glimpse of himself at this moment in a mirror opposite, and his blue tie seemed to glare at him and force him on. "I shall have to do whatever will make me independent soonest. They've got a number of children at home."

"It is very fine to be independent," said Mrs. Meredith, in her soft way; "or at least so all you boys think. You like to be able to do what you please without reference to your fathers and mothers." She

looked at her own boys as she spoke, not at Roger, and even this added to his exasperation. How different they were with this soft mother, whose very look was a caress, from what he was, with all the children at home, and a father and mother whom numbers made impartial, and who had few prejudices in Roger's favour. Poor boy, his heart swelled with a sense of his disadvantages; and naturally he did all he could to make them show the more.

"Independence don't mean that sort of thing to me," he said; "it is taking the expense off my father, that's what they think of. I must get my own living as soon as I can, that is what it means; and if it is not a very good living, so much the worse for me. No one e'se will pay much attention. Whether one does what one likes or does what one must, makes all the difference——"

"That is spoken like a philosopher," said Mr. Beresford, who had been looking at the young bear thus making uncouth noises of self-assertion with distasteful amusement; "but you must recollect that very few of us have the privilege of doing what we like. When we get this advantage, it is generally when we cease to prize it, when we should be thankful to go back to the *must*, and be under force again."

Under other circumstances Roger could only have been respectful of Cara's father, but he was otherwise inspired now, and ready to defy even that most privileged of mortals. "So you people say, sir," he said, with a rough show of respect, "who have things all your own way. So long as you don't know what it is to be under force of circumstances, I suppose it seems rather fine than otherwise to do your duty though you don't like it. I have thought that myself now and again. It looks self-denying and all that; but if it's true, as people say, that you do best what you like best, I don't see the good of self-denial in that way."

"I agree with Mr. Burchell," said Oswald; "but I go further. What is the good of self-denial in any way? It always involves unkindness to somebody. Nature gives you a beautiful day, for instance, and you turn your back upon her and work. What could be more unkind and ungrateful? Or Cara says to me, 'Come out, and play croquet in the Square——'"

"I hate croquet," cried Cara, indignantly. "I never did such a thing in my life; besides, it is winter, and I could not play croquet if I liked it ever so much."

"What does it matter about details? I use the word croquet as a symbol—or my mother requires my attendance upon her somewhere. Then the rest of the world turn round and call me idle! Self-denial is a disagreeable quality, Cara. Let us avoid it. At the best it is only extracting merit out of necessity, for nobody denies himself except when he's obliged to do so."

"Sybarite!" said Mrs. Meredith, shaking her head at her son; and then she turned to talk to Mr. Beresford, and the four young people were left to themselves.

"Sit down, Roger," said Cara; "why should you stand up there as if you were defying the world. You are all quite wrong. It is not self-denial to do what you are forced to do. When you give up anything of your own free will because it is right, then perhaps——"

"Only perhaps, Cara? Don't take away the little satisfaction one has in doing a thing that is disagreeable. Look here," said Edward, suddenly seating himself in the vacant place by her which Roger had neglected to take, "going to India is very disagreeable to me. I think I could do just as well at home. My feeling is all against it; I might, perhaps, make more money there, but money is not everything. There is no necessity that I can see, one way or another—but my mother wishes it—that is to say, my mother thinks my father would like it——"

Roger looked quickly at Mrs. Meredith. Is there a father? he said to himself, with a mental whistle of astonishment, to which he dared not give audible utterance. "Whew!" and the astute young man immediately leaped to the conviction that here was something unquestionably wrong.

"I thought—it was Oswald—whom Mr. Meredith wanted——"

Oswald laughed. "Have you not found out, Cara, that Oswald is an individual?" he said. "If Ned likes to be knocked about the world according to other people's fancies, that is his affair. I don't. Yes, it was Oswald that was wanted; but I never was a man for competitive examinations, my ideas don't run in that channel, so I dropped my mantle upon my brother. Oh, he will have compensation; he will be a Member of Council while I am only a briefless barrister. He will move princes about like chessmen while I have no influence with any one but a stray editor. Ned will be the great man of the family—what, you don't approve of me! You would rather Ned stayed at home than I?"

Cara had given him a very young girl's most emphatic sign of disapproval. She turned her shoulder upon him, and averted her head. Poor Roger looked on with a burning heart, seeing the two brothers, one on each side of her, contending, as it seemed, for her approbation. The fact that there were two seemed to shut him out more and more. He was indignant, disappointed, wounded. He said to himself in his heart every ill thing he could think of against this strange house. First, the Sunday dinner-party—even though he had himself condoned it by becoming one of the guests; second, the work left on the table, which he felt sure the mistress of the house was quite capable of taking up, although restrained by his presence from actually doing so. Then the separation of the family—the father in India, the mother here. What a house for Cara to be thrown into! What an example for her! A woman who lived apart from her husband and yet asked people to dinner could not be a proper woman to have the charge of Cara. Of course, she was just the sort of person to encourage a girl in flirting, to put evil into her head. These were the thoughts that kept burning and scorching the brain of poor Roger as he stood before the fire in this strange

house, the people on either side of him so much engaged with each other, and he so completely left out. Why did he come here to make himself unhappy? Why build such foolish hopes upon this day? His aunt at Notting Hill would have been a much better companion, a great deal kinder, and she would be wondering now what had become of him, or thinking, perhaps, that he was enjoying himself! Strange enjoyment! He made a distinct pause in his thoughts to realise her, but he made no sort of movement to go away, which was the only thing he could do to relieve her anxiety. She would wonder if he meant to come back; if he was going to stay all night; or if he had gone off straight from his friend's house to catch the train. There were not all the usual trains on Sunday nights, and this would perplex her, poor lady, still more. All this passed through his mind, and he was very uncomfortable. Yet he made no attempt to go away.

"Roger," said Cara, getting up suddenly, for she felt herself embarrassed on her side, and was glad of a way of escape, "are you going back to the College to-night?"

Her question chimed in with his thoughts, but he did not reply in the way that would have seemed most in keeping with those thoughts. "It does not matter," he said; "I think I shall go down by the first train to-morrow." As soon as he felt her soft eyes upon him the foolish young fellow thought that all must go well.

"If I were you I would go to-night," she said; "you will be obliged to get up so early, and it is so dark in the mornings. You never used to like getting up——" Roger felt the light and the warmth coming back to him, flooding him round and round.

"I don't mind now," he said. "It does not matter. To-night is better than to-morrow," which was an incoherent utterance that Cara could not understand.

"Have you been enjoying it, then? I was afraid you did not like them," said Cara, very low, so that no one could hear but himself. Then Roger glowed with sudden kindness, and felt ready to embrace the whole party.

"It is only my bad manners," he said. "Oh, Cara, have I been making myself disagreeable? You know they always go on at me about my manners at home."

"Your manners are well enough," she said, with a serious look. "I thought you were not—pleased. Come, then, and sit down, and talk with the rest; they are more like you than they are like me. You ought to be friends, for you are all—boys. A girl has less to say to them. And then Edward is going to India, too——"

"I would rather talk to you; but I will do whatever you like, Cara."

"Yes; but do it, then," she said with a smile, and, leaving him there, she went over to the other side of the fire, and sat down under the shadow of Mrs. Meredith, from whence she looked across placidly at the three whom she had abandoned. Mrs. Meredith smiled upon Cara,

putting out her hand caressingly to lay it upon the girl's shoulder. They made a pretty group; but Mr. Beresford, who was leaning over the little table, talking earnestly, did not care for the interruption. A slight cloud came over his face when his daughter came within hearing. He finished what he was saying quickly, and then was silent; it had not been intended for her ear. While on the other side of the room the young men looked at each other in a kind of armed truce, and a moment of dead silence elapsed, the first that had occurred since they came into the room, in the midst of which Mrs. Meredith was heard saying, "I fear you are not amusing yourself, Cara. Are the boys disagreeable? Go and sing something for us. I like your soft little voice on Sunday night. Sing me the 'Angels;' that suits you best."

"Just what I was going to suggest," said Oswald, getting up and going to the piano to open it for her. It was in the back part of the room, which was but partially lighted. Both the others, in their different ways, bestowed a private benediction on Oswald, who was more ready than either of them. They sat looking wistfully into the dimness, listening to Cara's soft voice, which rose out of it like a bird. "Angels, ever bright and fair," she sang, looking herself, that little white vision, only half-visible, like anything angelic or fairy-like, which the imagination chose to select. Roger listened with his heart full. But for the apparition of that other figure beside her, behind her, who stood keeping time with an involuntary movement of his head and hand in a way which tempted even his brother to blaspheme, Roger's heart would have run over with a soft ecstasy. He had never heard Cara sing before, except in her schoolgirl days. As for the other two, the elder pair, Mr. Beresford's countenance cleared and he resumed his talk, and Mrs. Meredith once more gave him her whole attention, while Edward and Roger stared into the back drawing-room. They did not address nor take any notice of each other, but gazed blankly at Cara, who, having already one attendant, evidently wanted none of them. When she had come to an end of that song, Mrs. Meredith, though she was to all appearance absorbed in what Mr. Beresford was saying, cast a word over her shoulder to the young performer,

"That was very sweet; thank you, dear. Now sing us something else." And Cara went on.

Roger sat and listened, between misery and rapture. He did not know which predominated. Edward, to whose state of mind no one had any clue, turned over a book, and hummed the air she was singing. Not a word passed between the young men, notwithstanding that they were both boys, as Cara had said, both going to India, and with every kind of bond of external resemblance. But Roger did not feel any direct hatred to Edward as he did to the other, who was always thrusting himself forward; and thus an hour passed away. When that was over, Cara rose and said good-night. Then there was a question who was to take her home, which showed as much as did his own attitude—reclining

tranquilly in his chair—that Mr. Beresford had no idea of going away. Here Roger sprang to the front, for once forestalling Oswald. He took his leave hurriedly, with confused thanks to Mrs. Meredith, and followed Cara closely as she went downstairs, alarmed lest some one might interfere even at the last moment. It was but a few steps, unfortunately, from one door to the other, and though she lingered a moment on the step, wrapping her shawl closely around her, Cara did not ask him to go in.

"It was very kind of you to come," she said, giving him her hand; "and I am afraid you have not enjoyed it, Roger; but you will like them better when you see more of them." She said this as people say so many things, apologetic and otherwise, not because she wanted to apologise for the Merediths, but because she did not know very well what to say.

"I don't think I shall ever like them," said Roger; "but that does not matter. Cara, let me just say one word. I don't think that they are the right kind of people—for you."

"For me!" After the first astonishment Cara laughed. "I did not think you set up for being such a critic. What have they done to make you think ill of them? They have been very kind to you."

"I did not want their kindness," said Roger, hotly; "they are not the kind of people I like to see you with, Cara."

"I think I will say good-night," said Cara, with dignity. "It is cold here, and you have a long walk to Notting Hill. It is a pity you missed your train. Good-night."

She did not so much as look at him, as she turned away and disappeared, the door closing behind her. He had offended her now to make an appropriate finish of this unhappy Sunday! But however cold it might have been to Cara, it was not cold to Roger as he pushed his way at a tremendous pace along the Sunday streets, so much darker than usual on account of the closed shops, and filled with passengers so different from the usual crowd. He would have kept himself warm in Siberia at that pace. His aunt was waiting for him, but half-disposed to give up her watch, and wondering what had become of him, as he thought she would.

"I am very glad to have you for another night, Roger; but I thought you must have rushed off to catch the train without thinking of your portmanteau," she said; and then she gave him a glass of wine, half-proud, half-disappointed to hear that he had dined "with his fine friends," and sent him to bed with kind good-nights; for he had to start early in the morning, and, no doubt, she thought, the day had been fatiguing, though so pleasant. She was kinder than Cara; perhaps it would have been better for him if he had not gone to the Square at all, but contented himself with Notting Hill.

CHAPTER XVII.

EDWARD.

CARA had a visitor quite early next day, when she had just retired upstairs to the drawing-room after breakfast. It was Edward Meredith, who came with some message from his mother. He had been Cara's friend when they were both children, though Oswald was the one who had claimed her intimacy since she grew up; and he had come now on a sort of investigation to see for himself whether his brother had taken his place. I think Cara, too, had a consciousness of Edward's meaning, though neither of them could have put it into words; and no idea of love, properly so called, was in the minds of the boy and girl. To be sure, he was twenty-one, no longer legally a boy, and thought himself very much a man in many ways. He was aware that the little serious maiden, who had been the friend of his childhood, appeared very sweet and attractive to him now, and that he did not like Oswald to assume the privileged place by her, to be the one who talked with her and walked with her, and offered her those small services which it is often more pleasant to render than to receive. Edward was not jealous of his brother, but he had the suppressed consciousness of being placed at a disadvantage by Oswald, which is not very unusual in the mind of the younger of such a pair. Oswald had been, not above him, but a step in front of him all his life; he had what those who did not like him called more showy qualities, what those who did like him described as greater talents than Edward's. He talked better, he was more ready in demonstration of his sentiments, and could always express himself—whether on paper or in speech—more fluently. These were real advantages; and to these, as was natural, the young man who felt himself to be second added others which were not so real. He thought Oswald's verses, and literary pretensions, and gracefulness, and good looks were all infinitely superior to his own, and was apt to be depressed, and not to do himself justice in Oswald's presence. It was a relief to find how late Oswald was, and that he could come in, early in the morning, to test Cara, and find out if all her friendliness had been transferred to his brother. If so, Edward would not grumble, but he would know what he had to expect, and would not look for anything more. When he had delivered his mother's message, there was a little pause. They had both a little ingenuous awe of each other, and did not know how to begin.

"How long it is since I have been here!" Edward said at last; "not since the days when I used to be afraid to move for fear of breaking some of the beautiful things. My mother wisely refrained from china in those days; but we were always told that Mrs. Beresford was 'very particular.' You do not mind my speaking of her? I remember her so well lying on the sofa, like a picture. You are like her, Cara, but not very like her——"

"No; for she was beautiful," said Cara, simply; and Edward took her words as she said them, without interposing a laughing compliment, as Oswald would have done. "I do not mind; though sometimes I wonder, when I am sitting alone here——"

"You wonder? what?"

"All about her," said Cara, her voice dropping lower; "about her dying. Don't you think it must be hard to die like that when everybody wishes you to live? And then—about—whether she ever comes here? the drawing-room is just as she left it——"

Edward looked round it, following her glance. He did not smile; his countenance had an air of sympathy and interest, almost awe.

"It is so strange, sitting here when all the house is still. One seems to see a chair placed differently to what it was before. I did not do it; and then everything is so still. One feels as if some one was looking, gazing at one. Sometimes I am sure that the eyes are there—not unkind, to frighten me, but solemn and steady, not changing from one thing to another, as we do. Did you ever think what happens when we die?"

"Not much, I am afraid," said the young man, himself feeling the spell of the stillness, and as if those eyes might be upon him of which she spoke. "But, Cara, you ought not to be here by yourself, for it cannot be good for you to feel like this, or to be thinking such things. I like you to be here; but it would be better, more natural, for you in the country. You ought not to stay——"

"This is home," said Cara, with a little sigh; and then she brightened up. "I think I am making believe for the pleasure of being sympathised with," she said. "I am not dull. It is only sometimes, only now and then, in the morning. Somehow one feels more lonely in the morning, when everybody is busy. To have nothing to do, and to see no one all the long, active forenoon! at the Hill one could run out in the garden; there was always something to do; or if it rained there was work; but no one asks what I do with myself here."

"My poor little Cara! forgive me. I thought you were a little girl again."

"Oh, I don't need to forgive you. It is very kind of you, Edward. Am I a little girl, or am I rather old? I can't be quite sure sometimes. I suppose it is because I am fanciful," said Cara, the tears coming to her eyes in spite of herself. "Aunt Cherry always said I was. Look, I am going to cry—for nothing at all! You never—th—thought I was so silly," she said, with a smile on her face, but a childish sob breaking her voice.

"I wish you were with Aunt Cherry again," said Edward; "you ought not to be left by yourself here."

"Oh, I must be here. It is home, and I like it—sometimes. Your mother is very kind to me; and Oswald comes and talks——"

Perhaps it was scarcely possible that Edward should resist this temptation to inquire into Oswald's degree of favour. He was not jealous. No, he thought, he felt sure that he was not jealous; but he was always

the second, and no one likes that. He felt a slight passing sting and check when she spoke of Oswald, and in spite of himself could not but feel anxious to find out what degree of intimacy existed between them.

"Do you say this to Oswald? Does he know?" he added.

"I never said anything," said Cara, recovering herself; "why should I? it was nonsense. And then Oswald has so much to tell me about *him*—it is much more amusing than to chatter about one's self. Don't think me very silly, Edward. It was because you seemed to want to know about *me*——"

"So I did," he said; "so I do, Cara. It was you and I that used to be the friends. Oswald was bigger, don't you remember? It was always you and I——"

Cara made no direct reply to this representation. She even disregarded the anxious look he gave her, as he made this appeal to old recollections, of which she was not specially thinking at this moment for her part.

"How different people are," she said. "Some people tell you about themselves; some make you talk, I don't know how, of *you*. I don't think you would have a good moral effect upon me, Edward. You make me selfish; you make me think of myself. Oswald does not ask about me. He makes me listen to him. Oh, it is very pleasant, and it must be better, I feel sure——"

"You like it better? I am such an uninteresting fellow, Cara, not like Oswald. I prefer to hear about you——"

"Thanks," she said, with a little shy glance at him, and a slight reddening which she could not explain. "Did you think poor Roger very rough and very strange last night? I hope you did not think badly of him. He was, perhaps, a little cross, but he is not like that always, not even often. I don't think I ever saw him so cross before."

"I understand him, Cara. He was an old friend, too, and he hoped to have you to himself; whereas he found you among still older friends than he was, and intimate, and at your ease. And he was not at all at his ease—I understand him. I have had the very same sort of thing happen to me."

"With whom?" Cara asked rather abruptly. She was surprised, even slightly nettled, without knowing why. Did Edward know any other girl well enough? she asked herself. It was nothing to her, and yet she was half displeased.

"Oh, with no one in particular," he said. "I have stolen a march upon Oswald," he added, with a laugh. "I have had the luck of the early bird. He was always a late fellow. To be sure, he sits up writing when the rest of us go to bed."

"And is it true that he would not go to India, and put it upon you? I am very fond of poetry," said Cara, "I would rather be a poet than anything else in the world; but not to put the disagreeable work upon some one else—not to please myself at the expense of another——"

"That is not the way to put it, Cara. I am really the one that can

go best. Oswald should have a brilliant career at home. He is clever enough to do whatever he pleases, but it is not the same with me. Oh, I am not going in for humility; I can cram for an examination better than he can; it is a humble quality, but it is very serviceable. So we have both the part that suits us best."

"But you don't like it, Edward."

"Which of us likes best the special thing he has got to do? We all think something else would be better. Even you, Cara—oh, Heaven knows I did not mean to vex you. Is it I that have brought the tears into your eyes?"

"No," she said, putting out her hand; "but it is quite true. I am—out of sorts, I suppose, this morning. I can't help crying; and what you say is quite true. One always thinks something else would be better. Aunt Cherry says the same thing, but different. Edward, I will try to go to my India as you go to yours—without grumbling—"

"If I had not grumbled, you would not have known anything about it," he said; "and, Cara, if you were coming to India I should not grumble. I should be quite reconciled. It is parting from—every one I care for, that makes it so hard to me."

A kind of crimson reflection had come over Cara's face—not a blush, much more visionary than real—a reflection of a blush: the touch of a vague sentiment which was somehow in the air, and which lighted upon the girl's face because it was more sensitive than the boy's—that was all. But he saw the shadow of a rosy tint over her features, and it moved him with a vague sweetness of fancy, he did not quite know what. If Cara were to go to India—not with him, not as his wife, his thoughts had not gone so far—but if she too had to go, in some incomprehensible delightful way, how the aspect of that banishment would change! All at once, as he sat there, he seemed to see himself looking over the high bulwarks of the ship by her side, the blue water flying in soft ripples behind them, the foam-bubbles dancing on the waves, the sunshine shining, all the world so new and so sweet. How distinctly he realised the scene, which was just about as likely as that the Queen should go with Edward to India! He came back from that vision as from a long way off, with a half-choking sigh. "That is nonsense, I suppose. Still it is that, and not India, that vexes me. Parting from those I care for here."

"And Oswald—would have had that, too."

"Yes," said Edward, doubtfully; "Oswald would have had that, too—but Oswald—"

He stopped, and Cara did not ask him to go on. There was a little doubt in the repetition of the name. "But Oswald—" What was he going to say? She was too shy, too conscious, to ask. Cara did not blush, even in this shadowy way, when Oswald spoke to her, but she had a vague sense that perhaps he would be pleased to make her blush would like to move her. She was far more clear-sighted about him than about Edward. Just as she knew her own power over Roger, she knew

that Oswald would be pleased to have a like power over herself. She did not discriminate these fine differences of sentiment in words, but she was aware of them, without attempting definition. She could play upon Roger if she pleased as upon an instrument, and Oswald was trying, and would like to bring music out of her in the same way. She knew this instinctively, and perhaps Cara would not have been very much surprised to be told that Oswald was "in love" with her; but about Edward she had no insight, no theory. He was kind, and she could talk to him and open her heart; that was all she knew.

Just then they were interrupted by the entrance of Oswald himself, who came in, as he had got into the habit of doing, after his late breakfast. "Hallo, Ned, you here!" he said, in a tone of surprise. He was not by any means delighted by the appearance of his brother. "I did not expect to find you occupied so early," he said to Cara. "Have you had the bear at your levee, too? I hope he has recovered his temper this morning. If your natives in Berkshire are all of that complexion, Cara, I don't wonder you are glad to get away."

"Poor Roger! he did not mean to be rude. Did Mrs. Meredith think he was a bear?"

"Oh, my mother! She would not be the universal charmer she is if she was not something of a hypocrite," said Oswald. "You may be sure she will not allow that any of her visitors is ever disagreeable. I suppose Ned brought you her message about going out? Then I need not repeat it. And there is to be a tea-drinking to-morrow, Cara, with all sorts of strange beasts—authors and authoresses, and that kind of people. If you will keep close to me I'll tell you who they are. It will be a very funny company."

"But, Oswald, I thought you were an author too. Why do you laugh at them? I should have thought there would be sympathy——"

"Wait till you see them," he said, with a laugh. "My dear little Cara, there is a great difference always between out-and-out professionals and—other people. A man may indulge in as much literature as he pleases, and it does him no harm—indeed, it may chance to do him a little good. But the people who have nothing but literature to stand upon, that's a different thing altogether; they are generally people who are out of society. Ned, what are you going to do this morning? You don't mean to say you are wasting your time like an ordinary mortal? You were supposed to have gone to Westminster Hall, or the British Museum, or at the very least the London Library. See how cheaply some people get a character for virtue! and all the time, Cara, he was amusing himself and talking to you."

"I am going to work now," said Edward. "Remember, this is the first chance I have had of seeing Cara. You are not to sit and think," he said softly, taking her hand. "Go to my mother, will you, Cara? Do not stay all the long morning here."

"I shall not be—dull," she said, in the same tone, with a grateful,

friendly look, which went to Edward's heart. He was comforted, though he had to go away and leave the field clear for his brother, and did so without even the half-painful, half-compunctious feeling as of a grudge which he was ashamed of, which generally moved him when Oswald was concerned. Why should he entertain any grudge at his brother's success? If Oswald was not more agreeable, more bright, more winning than himself, he would not be more popular. But, more than all these reasonings, with which he was familiar, Edward felt the consolation of those discriminating words by which Cara had indicated the difference between himself and his brother—he, who made her talk; Oswald, who talked of himself. This kept him warm all the way to Westminster Hall, or wherever else it was that he went to pursue his studies for the future government of India; but perhaps the way in which he had occupied the first hours of the morning did not make his mind more clear for this much more important subject of thought.

"It is well that there should be one hard-working fellow in the family," said Oswald, as the door closed, "for the family's sake; and then it is astonishing what a zest it gives to one's own leisure—like—I suppose I must not quote Latin to you, Cara—like seeing a ship pitching and tossing at sea when one is safe on shore."

"How can you say so! how dare you say so!" cried Cara, with flashing eyes. "Oh, what is the good of your poetry and stuff if it only makes you enjoy the sight of another person working—doing what you ought to have done! Is that all the good it is? It ought to be something pure, something noble, something to make your heart rise——"

"Why, Cara!" cried Oswald aghast, yet half-laughing. "Poetry and stuff! is it you who are speaking, or some one else? This is quite a new outbreak for you."

"I did not mean that," cried Cara, with the hot blush of youthful shame; "still, if poetry does not make you more—a man—does not make you stronger and better, and more noble and true——"

"My dear little girl! Poetry is not morals and the Ten Commandments. You have got confused in your reasonings. Come, never mind scolding me, Cara. Listen to this. Your little temper has been put out with your bear last night, and Ned's gravities this morning. You want me to smooth you down again. And I don't like to be scolded. It answers with coarser natures, but I am too sensitive. I want the warm atmosphere of commendation to bring me out. Ask my mother if it has not been ever thus from childhood's hour. Ned can stand it. You may scold him for his good as much as you please—he will like it; but come here, Cara mia. Listen to this——"

"Oh, Oswald!"

"Don't scold me, Cara! Look here. I am just going to send it off to the *Piccadilly*. I shall not be half so sure of it unless my little critic approves. Come, you are not going to be hardhearted. I do want so very much to hear what you think of this."

He held out the dainty little manuscript, set forth in those irregular lines which are dear to youth. And Cara could not help feeling the pleasure and the grandeur of being his critic, and of hearing the poem read by its author, which was going to be printed, and to live for ever. It glanced across her mind how when Oswald was a great poet, as great as Tennyson or Browning, people would tell how he used to go and read his young verses to a girl whom he had known when he was a child; and this little scene arranged itself historically in her mind as a scene which would make the hearts of other girls beat with secret envy of her, the confidant of a poet. Thus Cara was mollified and yielded, and criticised only the verses, not the poet. Indeed, her criticism of the verses was of the mildest description, just enough to give zest to her almost unbounded praise. And the poet enjoyed himself greatly reading those innocent lines—which were quite innocent, if somewhat insipid—seeing her absorbed face and soft eyes full of attention, and delighting himself in the melody he had made. How wonderful is this appetite of youth for mere rhyme! Cara listened to each line chiming with the other in a trance of attention. It was as sweet to her as if it had been the truest music, and charmed her very soul.

Oswald went down to the office of the *Piccadilly* afterwards, in great satisfaction with his work. Sometimes these productions brought him in a guinea or two, and then how pleased he was! more pleased than if he had inherited a fortune. He thought himself on the high road to fame and fortune when this happened, and was pleased to let his friends think that he made a good deal of money by his pen. Luckily for him, he did not need to put any dependence upon these dilettante earnings; but they sweetened life to him, if they did not put much money in his purse. And the idea of Cara gave him a soft pleasure. He too thought how it might be told hereafter that his first critic was a beautiful girl, and that it was her enthusiasm which stirred him on to the heights he afterwards attained. "And what became of the beautiful girl?" he thought he could hear somebody ask in posterity. Yes, indeed! what became of her? Should she marry the poet, and be his muse and his critic combined, or should she be drifted away into some other career, and carry the memory of him with her to her last day, not quite breaking her heart, perhaps, or at least no more than could be mended? He smiled as he went along, with a little conscious warmth on his face, and wondered how this would be.

But just then chance threw something else in his way. He met a procession of school-girls—not a very wonderful thing—attended by one or two Sisters of one of the many modern Anglican sisterhoods, in poke bonnets and black veils, decorations which are often very effective when they surround a fair young countenance. Oswald had just caught sight of one which charmed him, and which was enclosed by a poke less rigid, and a veil less heavy than the others, which he concluded to mean novicehood, or even mere associateship. The owner of this soft serious face was

too young to have made any permanent choice of so grave a kind, and was, indeed, only a governess to whom a modification of the conventual dress had been permitted as a privilege. Oswald crossed the road, and went along very demurely, though it was not his way, parallel with the procession, looking furtively, and, as he flattered himself, with purely artistic admiration, at the little shepherdess of the flock. "She is a Perugino," he said to himself, and already the ready verses began to flutter to his lips. He would write a poem about her; she was the most charming subject—a true Perugino, with just that warm glow of colour, not fair but mellow—those soft features, those modest eyes. He began on the spot:—

From old Pietro's canvas freshly sprung,
Fair face! that thus so sweetly can combine
The maiden and the mother ever young—

(The reader will perceive that Oswald's verses were not of the highest quality.) He had got just this length when a sudden shriek disturbed him. The little procession was crossing a side street, and one of the younger children had made a rush from her companion, and in a moment, before any one could draw a breath, had been knocked down and apparently crushed by a cart which came lumbering slowly up the street, too slow and too heavy to alarm any one. Oswald, to do him justice, was not given to mooning when there was any need for active service. He rushed across the street, reaching the scene of the disaster before any one else, except his Perugino, who had flown with one small cry, and was herself half under the heavy cart, pushing it back with all her force, while the others stood aghast and shrieked, not knowing what to do. Nothing could be more swift, more ready, than the Perugino novice. She had already drawn the child half into her arms before Oswald reached the spot, and was feeling the little limbs all over, with a little panting cry, half horror, half want of breath. "Let me carry the child to the nearest doctor," cried Oswald. The colour had all gone out of the Perugino face—the big wheel of the cart touching her delicate shoulder made a background for her; she was a St. Catherine now. "There is something broken; she must go to the hospital," the girl said, looking up at him with that sudden acquaintance and confidence which comes in such a moment. Her shoulder brushed against him as she transferred the little burden to him. The child had fainted. He took the poor little crushed creature in his arms. They were within a stone's-throw of the great hospital, and there was nothing to be done but to carry it there. The elder Sister by this time had joined them, sending the curious, anxious, crying girls away under the charge of the remaining governess. "Agnes, you ought to go back with them. You are as white as a sheet. You will faint," said the Sister, putting an arm round the girl.

"Oh, no; I am better. Let me go and see what it is," she said.

Agnes? Was that the name? It was one of the saints, he had felt sure.

CHAPTER XVIII.
TELLING TALES.

"ROGER has been to pay dear Cara a visit," said Mrs. Burchell. "He was in London on Sunday, with his kind aunt, at Notting Hill; and he thought he would call. I don't approve of Sunday visits, but I suppose exceptions must be made sometimes, and Roger went; knowing her all his life, you know, he felt interested. Do you know a family called Meredith, Miss Charity? I should not think, from what he tells me of them, that they can be people you would care to know."

"Meredith! but of course you know them, Aunt Charity—poor Annie's friend, whom she was so fond of—the only person who was allowed to come in when she was ill—the most delightful, kind woman."

"People change as years go on; and Cherry is always enthusiastic—gushing, as my young people say. But do you know, Miss Charity, that poor Mr. Beresford is always there? dining there on Sunday; sitting till one does not know how late; and she is a woman separated from her husband," said Mrs. Burchell, lowering her voice. "I am sure that is a thing of which you cannot approve."

"Of women separating from their husbands?" Miss Charity was sitting in her dressing-gown, in her bedroom, by the fire. She had been laid up by "one of her attacks." This was how everybody spoke of it; and though she was completely out of danger, it was necessary to take care. The consequence was that she lived in her bedroom, and chiefly in her dressing-gown, and was sometimes fretful, hard to manage, and a strain upon Miss Cherry's powers. Almost any visitor, who would come and bring a little variety, and particularly a little news, was an advantage; therefore Cherry was very reluctant to interfere with what Mrs. Burchell said, especially as she was hungering for news of the child who, though she wrote so regularly, did not say half what Miss Cherry wanted to hear.

"I can't pronounce on such a question without knowing the circumstances," said Miss Charity. "Women are fools, but then so are most men as well."

"Oh, Miss Charity! that is one of your quaint ways of stating things. Mr. Burchell always says you have such quaint ways of expressing yourself; but always judicious, quite above what could be expected from a woman."

"Mr. Burchell is a good judge; he has means of knowing what may be expected from a woman," said the old lady, sharply. "And so you think badly of Mrs. Meredith? But make your mind easy; she is not separated from her husband."

"Not!" Mrs. Burchell echoed the negative in a tone which was faint with disappointment. "Oh, but pardon me, I fear you must be mistaken, for Roger says——"

"I thought that boy was a nice boy. What have you done to him to make him a gossip? Cherry, that was the one I thought well of, was it not? The others were naught, except Agnes; but this was a nice boy."

"Agnes is very self-willed," said Mrs. Burchell; "she is gone to that mission, though I am sure there is plenty to do at home and in the parish. I don't know what to say to her. But as for the others being naught, I don't think it is very kind of you to say so," she added, looking as if she meant to cry.

"It is only one of my quaint ways of expressing myself," said Miss Charity, grimly. "I hate a boy who is a gossip. It is bad enough in girls; but then one is sorry for the poor things that have nothing better to do. What does this boy of yours say? if he was my boy, I'd whip him for tale-telling. And what was he doing in the Square?"

"My children have always been brought up to confide in their mother," said Mrs. Burchell, on the verge of tears; "they have always told me their impressions. Thank Heaven, though my lot is not luxurious like some people's, I have always had comfort in my children."

"That is a hit at you and me, Cherry, who have no children," said the old lady, who was sharp and keen after her illness. "My dear, we are quite willing to admit your superiority. What did the boy say?"

"I am sure there was no boasting in my mind. I have very little occasion to boast. A poor clergyman's wife, with so large a family to bring up! but I *am* proud of the confidence of my children. Dear Roger went to see Cara out of kindness. He has always had a kind feeling to her, and the poor boy's heart was quite touched to see her among such people. They seem to live in an ungodly way, with dinner-parties on Sunday and that sort of thing—no regard for poor servants or for the bad example they are setting. And as for the lady, Roger did not tell me all; but he says Mr. Beresford *stays*—stays after Cara goes home, and, in short, is never out of the house. I felt that you ought to be told. Gentlemen have very peculiar ideas, I know—they don't follow our rules; but for a man to take his daughter, his young daughter, into such society——"

"Maria!" Miss Cherry was speechless with horror and dismay. She managed to get out this ejaculation, and no more. But the old lady was less easily moved. She put on the spectacles to which she had taken quite lately, and looked into her visitor's face.

"Here is an odd thing now," she said, "a very odd thing. I am willing to suppose you are an innocent sort of woman, Maria Burchell. You never did anything very bad—for one thing, you have never been tempted—and yet you are ready to believe any evil, at the first word, of another woman whom you know nothing in the world about. It is the oddest thing I know. If you had been a wicked person, one could have understood it. But a clergyman's wife, as you say, in a quiet country place, out of the way of temptation—why, you ought to think well of

everybody! You ought to be the sort of person who could be taken in, who would not believe harm of any one, an innocent woman like you!"

"Am I an innocent woman?" said Mrs. Burchell, shaking her head, with a sad smile. The distinction, if flattering to her moral character, was derogatory to her dignity. "Ah, how little we know each other! and what is called charity is so often mere laxness of principle. I hope I know the depravity of my own heart."

"In that case, my dear, there's nothing more to be said," said Miss Charity, briskly, "only that you ought not to come here under false pretences, taking us all in, and looking respectable, as you do. But, however bad you may be, Mrs. Meredith is not bad. I don't know much about the husband; perhaps they don't get on together very well. Perhaps it is health. She lives here, and he lives there—that is all I know; but she is a better woman than I am; that I'll answer for. How she can put up with that fool of a nephew of mine, I can't tell. He is very learned, I grant, and a fellow of half the societies. Well; and so your boy said——? What is the woman crying for, I would like to know?"

"Oh!" wept Mrs. Burchell, "I never thought to have lived to be so spoken to; and by an old friend. Oh, Cherry! you that have known me from a girl, how can you sit still and do your knitting, and hear me talked to so?"

"She does not mean it," said Miss Cherry, softly, "dear Maria! She has been ill. She can't help being a little irritable."

"Stuff!" said Miss Charity. "She brought it on herself. Go away, Cherry; if I were irritable, it is you who would feel it first. Now, Maria, don't be more of a fool than you can help. What did the boy say?"

Miss Cherry went back to her knitting, with a suppressed sigh. It was very true that it was she who paid the penalty first; but to see anybody crying troubled the kind soul. She gave a kind little pat as she passed to Mrs. Burchell's fat shoulders. She was knitting a huge white shawl in thick wool, to keep the old lady warm, and her own slight person was half lost in its folds.

But there was not very much more to be got from Mrs. Burchell. The boy had not, indeed, said any more, nor so much as she had reported. He had been betrayed by the sore state of his feelings, poor Roger, to give a very slight sketch of his uncomfortable Sunday—how he did not think the lady to whom Mr. Beresford talked so earnestly, who had a husband, and yet had no husband—who asked people to dinner on Sunday, and who—but Roger did not say this—had two sons who interfered so uncomfortably with his own inclinations—was at all a good friend for Cara. This was the extent of Roger's confidence, and he regretted bitterly having given it before the evening was out; for it is one thing to disburden your heart of a grievance, and quite another to have that grievance enlarged and embittered by constant reference and repetition. He heard so much of it before he left the Rectory that even-

ing that he was furious with himself for having betrayed his wound, and felt ashamed of it, and guilty so far as Cara was concerned. Therefore, Mrs. Burchell was rather glad of the personal offence which concealed the fact that she had very little to say. It had given a great zest to her visit that she had Roger's news to tell; but there was much less detail than she could have desired, so she dropped into her own personal grievance about Agnes, who had insisted on going to the mission-house to teach, when there was plenty to do at home; but neither of the ladies entered warmly into it, Agnes being a greater favourite with them than her mother. When she was gone, however, Miss Charity fell into a musing. Age had crept a little, just a little, upon her. She was no longer the vigorous woman, of no particular age, whom Dr. Maxwell had commended as a type of womankind. Winter is unfavourable to the human frame when it approaches seventy. With a soft, perpetual summer, never blazing, as it is in the south, and chequered by no chilly gales, would it be necessary that threescore and ten should be man's limit, or that we should ever die? Miss Charity felt the unkindly influence of the winter. When summer came back she would be all right again—or so, at least, she thought.

"It is amazing, the ill people have in their thoughts," she said, at last. "That woman, with her 'laxness of principle' and her depraved heart, and her indignation to be taken at her word! Now, Cherry, that was an inoffensive girl enough. When she was Maria Thompson there was no particular harm in her. I believe we ought all to die at twenty. What a deal of mischief it would save the world."

"And good, too," said Miss Cherry, in her soft voice.

"Good! not so much good. Do you know, I don't feel comfortable about Mrs. Meredith. I know she's a nice woman; but, bless my soul, the number of nice women I have known, who have been—no better than they should be! And Cara, you know—Cara is our business, Cherry; we are her nearest relations. I do believe she would be better here. Nobody can say that you are—no better than you should be. You don't form friendships with men. I daresay that's all Mrs. Meredith's sin at bottom."

"But that is only," said Miss Cherry, composedly, "because there are no men to form friendships with. You may laugh, Aunt Charity; but I say quite what I mean. I am not a young girl—neither is Mrs. Meredith. If she is good to my poor brother James, shouldn't we be grateful? And as for Cara—though Heaven knows how much I would give to have her back again——"

"Who is that at the door? I won't see any more people—that woman has put me out for the day. Though I know it is nonsense, I can't get it out of my head. She is a great deal too fond of being popular. She is——. Whom do you say? Mr. Maxwell? to be sure, it is his day. Well, I suppose he must come in, of course. And just as well; we can ask him, and set it to rest."

Mr. Maxwell came in, as he had done regularly every week for no one knew how many years. He was redder and rustier, and perhaps a trifle stouter; but that did not show to familiar eyes. Otherwise, the five years which had elapsed since Mrs. Beresford's death had made no alteration in the doctor. He was on that table-land in the middle of life when five years tell less than at any other period. He came in with the slight bustle which was characteristic of him, and sat down by Miss Charity, and got through quickly that little confidential talk which is necessary between a doctor and his patient, during which Miss Cherry took her big piece of work to the window, and stood there, holding the mass of white wool in her arms, and knitting on, with her back towards the others. When this formula had been gone through, she returned to her chair. Her interest in the matter was too great to allow even her aunt to open it. "Have you seen my brother James lately?" she said.

"Your brother James!" The question seemed to startle and confuse the doctor. "We have seen very little of each other these five years."

"Ah! I thought you were not so intimate," said Miss Cherry, whom the suspicion had pained. "Is there—any reason? I should like so much to know."

"Well! I suppose there always is some reason or other. But no—estrangements come by accident constantly, Miss Cherry. I can't tell what is the reason. I don't suppose I know. We have drifted apart, that's all; people do so every day without knowing why."

"People know when it begins," said Miss Cherry, eagerly; but here she was interrupted by her aunt.

"Never mind about estrangements. What we want to ask you, Mr. Maxwell, is whether you have seen Cara, little Cara, you remember? and also something about their neighbours. There is Mrs. Meredith, for instance. We hear she sees a great deal of them. Eh! why shouldn't I tell Mr. Maxwell exactly what we have heard? a doctor isn't a tale-bearer; he'd lose all his practice in a week. We've been disturbed by hearing (especially Cherry; she is more particular than I) something about Mrs. Meredith. You that know everything, tell us if it is true?"

"I have seen very little of Mrs. Meredith. I don't know much about James. Cara would be a great deal better here. What does he want with the child in London? he doesn't require her; he has done without her all these years. I'd have her back, Miss Charity, if I were you."

"It is very easy to talk of having her back. She is his child after all. Come, speak out; they say James is there constantly—and that this lady—she isn't separated from that husband of hers, eh?"

"Not that I know of."

"Not that you know of! Of course you know whatever there is to know. What is the matter? A woman should not let herself be talked of."

"Mrs. Meredith is not talked of, if that is what you mean; but I

have heard that James is constantly there. He oughtn't to do it. If he is fond of her, as I don't doubt he is fond of her——"

"Mr. Maxwell; how can you speak so of my brother?" said Miss Cherry, agitated and blushing, with the tears ready to come. "A married woman! I am sure he has no more thought of anything of the kind—What has his life been since Annie died? That speaks for itself; he has thought of no one but her."

"Hold your tongue, Cherry, my dear. You are an old maid; but you have a foolish young soul. What do you know of such things? Let us talk it over quietly. Now, Mr. Maxwell, you need not be upon p's and q's with me. If he is fond of her? that is the question. Nothing but what is innocent, you goose. We don't think James a bad man, do you suppose? Now, doctor; we must be at the bottom of it, now we have opened the question. What do people say?"

"I say—if he is fond of her, he oughtn't to compromise her, Miss Charity; that is all about it. Innocent! of course it's all innocent enough; but the woman is married, and her husband is thousands of miles off, and he ought to have more sense than to go there every evening, as he does. Yes, we've talked of it among ourselves; not to let it go any further; not to make any scandal, Heaven knows. No one thinks of any scandal; but he oughtn't to do it. I am not blaming your brother, Miss Cherry; he has fallen into it, poor fellow, without knowing. He and I are not such friends as we were. I have thought I had reason not to be quite pleased with him; but I don't do him injustice here. He means no harm; but he oughtn't to do it. The more he is fond of her, the more he ought to take care. And there you have my opinion, and that's all about it. I don't think any one has ever ventured to say more."

"It is too much to have said," said the old lady, "and she ought to know better. I don't put it all on him. She ought to have put a stop to it. Women see these things better than men; and besides, it is the women who suffer, not the men. She ought to have put a stop to it. I don't put it all on him, as you seem disposed to do."

"How could she put a stop to it?" said the doctor, warmly. "She is good to everybody. She opened her house to him when he was miserable. How is a woman to say to a man, after she has been kind to him, 'Don't come any more; people are beginning to talk.' Good Lord! it would be like supposing they had some reason to talk. If any woman said that to me I should feel that she thought me a brute bad enough for anything. No, no; everybody says women are hardest upon each other——"

"Everybody says a deal of nonsense," said Miss Charity, sharply. "A woman does not need to speak so plainly. She can let the man see when he is going too far without a word said. How? oh, there's no need to tell you how. We know how, that's enough. She could have done it, and she ought to have done it. Still, I don't think any harm of her; and it must simply be put a stop to, now we know."

"Ah!" said the doctor, drawing a long breath, "but how?"

"How, again? Why, what kind of people are you who call yourselves their friends? It's your business to do it. Cherry, my dear, I am a deal better; the bronchitis is all gone, and Barbara is as careful of me as a woman can be. You'll go off directly to the Square. If I were well enough, if it were not for this stupid bronchitis, I'd go myself; but it isn't worth a life; is it, doctor? See how things are going on. Of course, you won't make any fuss, Cherry; but whatever ought to be done you'll do."

Maxwell turned, as the old lady made this address to her niece, and looked at her. What would poor old Cherry do? he said to himself, watching her with curiosity and wonder. Was she a person to face this dilemma, which had kept various and more determined persons in difficulty? She let her work drop upon her knee, and looked up with an agitated face. She grew pale and red, and pale again.

"How am I to speak to James?" she said, hurriedly catching her breath—"a man!"

Then she made a pause and an effort, and the doctor, astonished, saw a soft light of resolution come into the mild old maiden's face.

"Of course, she said, still a little breathless, "I will not think of that if there is anything I can do."

"And of course there is something to do!" said the more energetic old lady. "My patience! what do people get old for, doctor? I should do it without thinking twice. What do they say about a sound mind in a sound body? I wish, for my own part, when an old woman gets bronchitis, she could get it in her soul as well, and be all bad together. But for this old body, I'm as strong as ever I was; and Cherry was always weakly, poor dear."

"Do not vex yourself, Aunt Charity; I will go," said Miss Cherry, with only a slight faltering in her voice. "Mrs. Meredith is a good woman, and my brother James is a good man too, though I wish he was more religious. When a thing is plain duty, that makes it—easy; well, if not easy, at least—. I will do my best," she said, softly. Mr. Maxwell watched her quite intently. It was all very well to say this here; but would she venture to do it? He had always taken an interest in Cherry, more or less. All these years, during which he had come weekly to the Hill, he had been always sensible when Cherry was not there, and had a way of looking round for her grey gown when he came in. Everybody knew his way of looking round, but no one, much less the chief person concerned, had ever divined that it was that grey garment which he missed when it was not there. Poor faded, fluttering, nervous Cherry; he had always taken an interest in her; would she really have the courage to take this bold, independent step, and do the thing which not one of James Beresford's friends had dared to do?

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"YOU DON'T EXPECT ME TO BE BLIND," SAID MISS CHERRY, ALMOST CRYING.

